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## Corporal Cannon, The Man of Forty Duels.

A TRUE STORY OF THE AFRICAN CHASSEURS.

BY COL. THOMAS HOYER MONSTERY,

CHAMPION-AT-ARMS OF THE TWO AMERICAS.

AUTHOR OF "IRON WRIST, THE SWORDMASTER," "THE DEMON DUELIST," "THE CZAR SPY," "MOURAD, THE MAMELUKE," ETC., ETC.



"HOLD, JEAN, YUSUF, YOU ARE BROTHERS! DO YOU NOT SEE IT? ARE YOU BLIND?"



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### PROLOGUE.

In the year 1809 Europe was in a bad way, with wars and rumors of wars in every corner; and traveling was very insecure, outside of the Empire of France.

In that year the renowned French robber, Cartouche, finding Paris too hot to hold him, fled to Italy, joined the band of Cornaro, the brigand, and began a system of midnight descents on populous cities, seizing rich men and exacting ransom from their friends.

The two robbers succeeded well till one night they raided the house of Count Lindholm, Danish ambassador at Naples. Then they found that one Dane is worse than two Italians in a fight.

Count Lindholm got at a sword, called his servants, and was only killed after a desperate struggle, in which his body-servant, Neil Krapp, was also left for dead, while five brigands bit the dust.

The robbers secured for ransom only two captives, twin babies in a cradle, children of the count, while Countess Lindholm was overlooked in the confusion and escaped alive, but only to die of brain fever a week later.

Neil Krapp, supposed to be mortally hurt, was thus left the only surviving member of the Danish embassy in the house.

In that same year the people in the wagon train of the Seventeenth French Horse Chasseurs, marching to the campaign of Wagram, under charge of an invalid sergeant named Cannon, were attracted by the cries of a baby in an otherwise empty hovel on the road to Bologna in Italy.

The child proved to be a boy, with a peculiar blue mark on his temple like a thunderbolt, and the initials J. L. on his clothing, and was formally adopted by Sergeant Cannon and his wife, who brought him up with the regiment, together with their only daughter, Josephine or Fifine, till the sergeant left the service, after Waterloo.

In the year 1818 the French brig Creole, bound from Marseilles to Corsica, was captured by Algerine pirates—then very numerous and daring—in the night, and the only person that escaped to France was a boy of ten, who was picked up next day by a revenue vessel, floating in the sea, lashed to a hencoop, and half dead with exhaustion and cold.

How he escaped, who lashed him to the hencoop, were mysteries no one could solve for some time, as the boy fell into a fever and became delirious for more than a week afterward.

When he became sensible he said that he was a soldier's son; that his name was Jean Cannon; that his parents and sister had been carried off by the Algerines; and that the only people he knew were the citizens of Tarascon, in the south of France, from whence his parents had come.

Every one was sorry for him, but it is not to be expected that a waif like him should receive much substantial help from people with families of their own to support.

So poor Jean Cannon was sent back to Tarascon as a pauper, where he was apprenticed to a farmer, and no one knew or cared what became of him till the year 1828, when he was drawn in the conscription and assigned to the 17th Horse Chasseurs, the very corps which had adopted him as a foundling twenty years before at Bologna.

Here the life of Jean Cannon may be really said to commence, and I trust my readers will pardon the foregoing explanations, which are necessary for understanding the true history of a very remarkable life.

THOMAS HOYER MONSTERY,  
*Champion-at-Arms.*

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE FIRST QUARREL.

In the spring of the year 1829, the Algerine corsairs had become so audacious that there began to be talk of an expedition to chastise them, an expedition which actually followed next year. The Seventeenth Horse Chasseurs were quartered in the south of France near Toulon, and the recruits of the previous year had joined their regiment from the remount depot.

On a lovely evening in May, the quarters of the first squadron of the chasseurs presented the usual scene of jollity that marks the close of a day in barracks.

The colonel, who was a renowned martinet, had had the regiment out all the afternoon exercising them in charges of every possible

variety, for Colonel Rampon was wont to say that no cavalry was worth anything till the recruits could ride full speed over any sort of ground, unbroken.

They had charged by platoons, by troops, by squadrons and in line, till the horses were white with foam and the men with dust, before the trumpets sounded the welcome "retreat," and the soldiers were dismissed to stables and supper.

Now they were lounging about the barrack-rooms, most of them in their shirt-sleeves, smoking their pipes, telling stories, singing songs, while at least a dozen card-parties were going on in every room.

In the dormitory of the first squadron three old soldiers were sitting on a bench, growling because they couldn't find a fourth to make up a game of whist. All the other old soldiers were mated, and most of the recruits were out of doors. "What sayst thou, Krapp?" asked one of the three, whose grizzled mustache told of long service, "since the rest are busy, we can play with a dummy."

"I hate a dummy," growled Krapp. "It takes away all the fun of the game, Lambinet. Yonder comes Godard. Let's ask him to join."

"And if Godard plays, count me out," broke in the third. "He revokes every chance he gets, and I won't have him for a partner against you two old foxes."

"There's no satisfying you, Marcel, answered Lambinet, with a grim smile. "Godard is too sharp for most people and yet you object."

"Marcel wants some one to bully," replied Krapp in the same tone. "Here comes a recruit—the white head—let's invite him."

The three veterans beckoned to a stout young fellow who came whistling along between the rows of beds, with the open face of a boy and a light blonde head of curls, nearly white in its fairness.

"Holal recruit, canst play whist?" asked Marcel in the usual dictatorial way of a veteran addressing a recruit.

"Yes, comrade," replied the young man with a cheery smile; "that is to say, a little, for I only learned it at the depot."

"Krapp and Lambinet made room for him politely; but old Marcel growled:

"We know that well enough without telling. Your kind is more used to playing baby games. But needs must when the devil drives."

The young recruit colored slightly.

"I won't play if you don't wish, comrade," he said rather proudly.

"Oh, sit down and take a hand, youngster," cried Lambinet impatiently. "Nobody minds old Marcel. He learned his habit of growling from the Old Guard before Waterloo. What's your name?"

"Jean Cannon, comrade," replied the recruit modestly. And is it possible that Monsieur Marcel was one of the Old Guard, the glorious Old Guard?"

His eyes glowed as he spoke, and he looked admiringly at Marcel, who growled in a more placable tone:

"Yes, yes, it is true, all that; but it is past and gone. Pick up your cards. Don't let old Krapp look into your hand there. Now watch my lead, and take care you support me properly."

Jean Cannon, nervous under the eye of his scolding partner, and not being yet fully up to the sublime mysteries of whist, began to play as well as he knew how, and got through the first hand with so few mistakes that Marcel contented himself with growling:

"You ought to have returned my lead in clubs when you took that trick in hearts, but it turned out for the best. Don't try on the same a second time."

Jean Cannon scratched his head and observed mildly:

"I had no clubs, Monsieur Marcel, so how could I return your lead?"

"Never mind. Look sharp this time, for these are two old foxes," growled the never-to-be-satisfied Marcel.

The second and third hands proceeded, till both parties had nine, and the final hand was so evenly distributed that it was not till the last trick was turned that the game was decided against Marcel, who had been scolding his unfortunate partner all through the playing.

At this last hand it was found that the recruit had kept a low trump which he might have used on a previous trick, and that old Krapp held a higher one.

This discovery so enraged the old grumbler that he snapped out:

"Serves me right for playing with a young blockhead like you. Go back to your mother and ask her pardon for being an ass."

Jean Cannon flushed highly this time.

"I'm no ass, Monsieur Marcel," he said, in a sharp tone. "You're out of temper, and you talk like a fool."

"I talk like a fool, do I?" cried Marcel, in a fury. "Take that, then!"

And he threw his bundle of tricks in the young recruit's face, receiving in return all the rest of the pack, when in a moment he struck Jean Cannon a resounding slap on the cheek, and the recruit grappled him.

The whole thing passed in three seconds, and then all the bystanders rushed in to part them, Krapp saying hurriedly to Jean:

"Keep quiet, or the provost guard will have you in the guard-house in no time. You'll have to go out to-morrow morning."

But the young recruit was fully roused by the stinging slap in the face he had received, and he struggled with his comrades, crying:

"What business had he to call me an ass! I'll show him in a minute!"

Then half a dozen men forced him back, and old Krapp whispered excitedly:

"Be quiet, I say. Do you want the provost guard down on us? I tell you this will have to be settled in the morning. You'll have all the fighting you want."

They managed to get him quiet after this, though he breathed hard and muttered:

"Shall I? I'll show him I'm no ass."

As for old Marcel, he had taken the matter quite coolly after the slap, standing up like a post and gnawing his grizzled mustache, while he watched the angry struggles of the young recruit with a smile of scornful derision that was meant to exasperate him still more.

When everything was quiet again and the two were at opposite sides of the dormitory, the veteran observed to Lambinet:

"I was a fool to take a boy like that for a partner, and a greater fool to get angry. There's no glory to be gained by giving him a lesson. Make the young fool apologize. I don't want to hurt him."

Lambinet nodded but looked doubtful.

"He seems to have a high temper, this boy, and I don't believe he will apologize. It will be as well to teach him that a recruit can't insult an old soldier with impunity. If not, you'll have all the others presuming on his example. I'm glad you slapped his face. Had he slapped you, it would have been a bad example for the others."

In the meantime old Krapp had got the young recruit into a corner and was talking reason to him, for Krapp was a provost-corporal or assistant fencing-master of the squadron, and he knew that this recruit would have no chance before an old swordsman like Marcel, in a duel.

"Look here, young man," he began, "I like you, because you are a white head like myself, and I don't want to see you carved like a chicken to-morrow morning. Do you know anything about handling a saber?"

Jean Cannon blushed. He had become his usual modest, good-humored self again, when Krapp spoke kindly to him.

"Nothing, monsieur, but the cuts and guards which they taught me at the depot."

"Ah, that is no use. Have you never fenced at will with any one?"

"Never, monsieur, but—"

"But what, young man?"

"But I used to be called the best man in the town of Tarascon at the sticks."

"The sticks, eh! But that is very different from a sharp sword that cuts like a razor. This Marcel is an old hand, and he will slash you like a leg of mutton. You ought to apologize to him, you see."

Jean Cannon started and flushed scarlet.

"What! I apologize to him? For what? That I let him call me an ass and slap my face! My faith, Monsieur Krapp, there is not any reason in that, is there?"

Krapp could hardly help smiling at the logic of the recruit.

"But then if you go in to fight him he will lay you up with a sword-cut for six months. Besides, you must remember that he is an old soldier who fought at Waterloo, and you are a boy. It was not your place to tell a veteran like him that he talked like a fool."

"But he told me I was an ass, first," persisted the innocent recruit, "and he threw his cards in my face. What could I do, Monsieur Krapp? I am no ass."

Krapp shrugged his shoulders.

"All the same, you will have to apologize or fight. That is certain."

"Very well," said the young recruit firmly; "then I will fight, Monsieur Krapp, if you will be my second."

The veteran smiled.

"That goes without saying. I will stand by you. But I warn you he will be too much for you. Marcel is a regular fire-eater."

Jean Cannon shut his teeth and muttered:

"Maybe I'll show him a trick he never saw. I'll not be called an ass and beg his pardon too."

### CHAPTER II.

#### THE FIRST DUEL.

At the period of which we speak, dueling was a fixed institution in the French army and not uncommon in all the others. But in France every one fought with rapier or saber, from generals down to high privates, in spite of all the laws and orders that could be issued. The French army had had nothing to do since the Napoleonic wars; the soldiers were resting in idleness; France was humiliated before all the world by the memory of Waterloo; and her fiery sons, failing a foreign enemy had to fight among themselves, just for fun.

The Celtic blood of the old Gauls, like that



of the Millesians in Ireland, was at the bottom of all the trouble, but whereas a shillelah fight contents an Irishman, nothing but cold steel will satisfy a Frenchman, and a regular Donnybrook Fair of small-sword and saber was going on all over France, at the time that Jean Cannon faced his adversary, Marcel, for his first saber duel.

It was a cold, raw morning, though the month was May; for during the night the dreaded *mistral* had set in from the Atlas Mountains, and the *mistral* sets every one to shivering through the south of France.

The parties to the duel had risen early, and, having answered their names at roll-call, had sauntered out of the barracks in different directions on various pretexts, to rendezvous at the regular dueling ground of the garrison.

This was a little plot of green by the side of the town cemetery, at a remote corner. It was secluded from observation; bounded on two sides by an angle of the low cemetery wall, and on the other sides open to the level downs and sand-hills that surround Toulon, with a clear view of the blue Mediterranean below the cliffs.

The first to arrive on the ground was old Marcel, accompanied by two provost-corporals, come to see their old comrade "carve the spring chicken," as they said.

It never entered their minds that the veteran could be otherwise than victorious in his contest with a recruit, and they were cracking jokes with Marcel over the affair of the night before, and roughly advising him to "be easy with the baby."

"Oh, yes," growled Marcel, "I'll be easy with him if he'll listen to reason from the rest of you; but you see it is necessary to give a lesson, or all the recruits will be following his example."

To which his friends assented cordially, and presently spied Jean Cannon coming to the place of meeting, accompanied by old Krapp and another provost-corporal, to whom they hurried forward to exchange greetings and discuss the preliminaries of the affair.

While they were doing this the two principals were left alone, and there was a great contrast in their appearance and behavior to each other before the duel.

Marcel—tall, dignified, bronzed, with his white mustache—looked the picture of an old soldier, and stood leaning on the cemetery wall, with his arms folded, smoking a black pipe, and never so much as glancing at his opponent.

Jean Cannon—young, florid, fair-haired, with a stout, thick-set figure, and round, innocent-looking face—was walking up and down, glancing every now and then at his foe and muttering angrily:

"That's the man called me an ass, is it?"

He got so tired of waiting that he was on the point of calling out to his seconds, when the conference broke up and all four came at him at once, trying to persuade him to apologize.

"We have been talking over this affair," said Corporal Gigot, "and we are all of the opinion that you ought to apologize to Monsieur Marcel or fight him."

"He's an old man, you a recruit," put in Corporal Picot. "You ought not to have told him he talked like a fool."

"He'll cut your ears off," interjected old Krapp. "He swears he will."

"You should apologize," added Corporal Tartarin, solemnly.

The young recruit looked amazed and angry as he burst out:

"Eh, *mon Dieu*! Apologize to him, when he slapped my face and called me an ass! I won't do it. It is his place to beg pardon."

"Very well, then," cried Picot, "you'll have to fight him. You understand!"

"Yes, you'll have to fight him," echoed the others. "We wash our hands of it."

Jean Cannon spit on the ground angrily.

"Eh, *mon Dieu*! you others, what do you suppose I came here for? Of course I'll fight him. I came to fight. He shall not call me an ass for nothing. Give us the weapons. Apologize, indeed!"

Corporal Picot brought the sabers, both ground as sharp as razors, and said to old Marcel in an angry tone:

"I've done all I could to save him. Go to work and carve the chicken."

Then both men had the sabers given to them; Corporal Tartarin touched the ends of the blades together, holding them in his hands to prevent either surprising the other, and uttered in a sharp voice, as he sprung back, the word:

"Go!!!"

In a moment both men had sprung back out of measure; when young Jean Cannon seized his saber with both hands like an ax, and rushed at Marcel with a shout, plying him with a succession of furious blows, in a style such as the old man had never seen used with a saber before.

It was no use trying to parry and cut back, for it was evident that the recruit did not care whether he was wounded or not, so long as he got a cut at Marcel, and the veteran had all the instinct of a swordsman to risk nothing.

Instead of meeting and wounding the recruit, as every one had thought he was sure to do, Marcel became confused, gave ground, parried

wild, retreated to the low wall, and finally fell back over it, his sword escaping from his grasp, while Jean Cannon, with a shout of fury, threw away his own weapon, caught the veteran by the throat with his left hand, and raised a fist like a leg of mutton, threatening Marcel, while he roared furiously to him:

"Now, then, am I an ass? Say quick, am I an ass?"

"Let go my throat!" gurgled Marcel, who felt that this young and vigorous recruit was as strong as a bull.

"Am I an ass? Quick!" bellowed Jean Cannon still more furiously. "Tell me, or I'll knock all the teeth down your throat! Am I an ass?"

"No, no, no," stammered poor Marcel, now completely demoralized. "For Heaven's sake don't choke me."

"Do you apologize for that slap?" cried Jean, shaking him furiously.

"Yes, yes," gasped Marcel.

"Then you see, gentlemen," said the young recruit, coolly, as he released the old man and stepped back, "that I am not an ass."

And with that all his fury seemed to vanish at once, and Jean Cannon burst into a hearty fit of laughter as he surveyed the astonished faces of the witnesses.

"You see that spring chicken is sometimes quite hard to carve, father Krapp," he pursued, turning to his own second. "I told you I had a trick of my own to show Monsieur Marcel."

And he quietly extracted a pipe from his pocket, filled it and began to smoke, while Picot muttered to Tartarin:

"Eh, *mon Dieu*, what are we old fellows to do if all the recruits are to turn out the same way?"

Jean Cannon heard the remark and laughed.

"Have no fears, corporal. All the recruits are not like me. Besides, I know that I did not deserve this victory. I don't doubt that if Monsieur Marcel had known my way of doing things in advance, he would have been prepared for me. It was a mere chance. See here, father Marcel, forgive and forget. You were wrong to call me an ass, but I made a bad mistake in playing, and I beg your pardon. Will you shake hands?"

Old Marcel, looking like a man dazed, shook hands mechanically, saying:

"You are a brave boy. You'll make a good soldier some day. As for me, I am no good any more, save for the boneyard."

They sauntered away back to the barracks after that, and old Krapp fell behind with his late principal, to whom he said:

"See here, young man, I like you. You do not fight like a Frenchman. You ought to have been a Dane. You are a natural fighter. But don't make a mistake. This will yet bring you a crop of quarrels, and you will not get out of all of them as easy as this one."

Jean Cannon looked at his friend gratefully.

"I know it, father Krapp. I am not such a fool as they thought me. I had made up my mind to let Marcel hit me anywhere, so long as I could get one good blow at him. But I know I am a greenhorn. After this I am going to learn to fence, so that I can take care of myself. They call you the best fencer in the regiment. Will you teach me?"

Old Krapp grasped his hand warmly.

"Teach you? Ay, that I will, if only for your white head and those blue eyes of yours, that remind me of my old master, dead and gone these twenty years. Ah, how time flies!"

The old soldier sighed heavily, and Jean Cannon asked, rather timidly:

"What did you mean by saying just now that I fought like a Dane, Monsieur Krapp? Are the Danes great fighters?"

Krapp smiled in his grim way.

"Ay, ay, they'll fight two of any other nation but the English, but they're all fools. It does them no good. Here am I, a Dane, and for all that, I am only a corporal in a French regiment, and won't ever get a step higher. Yes, boy, I'm a Dane, and you ought to be one from your face. I'll teach you all I know for the sake of that face."

"Thank you, Monsieur Krapp, thank you," answered Jean Cannon heartily. "You'll find me a very obedient pupil. See if you don't."

And it was a fact; for, from that day forth, old Krapp and Jean Cannon were always to be seen together, and the old Dane taught the recruit things he had never dreamed of in the science of handling a sword, till Jean became renowned throughout the regiment as the most promising pupil in the *salle d'armes*.

He was always modest and quiet in his demeanor toward old soldiers after his affair with Marcel; his good nature and joviality were inexhaustible; he got up quite a friendship with his former antagonist; learned to play whist with perfect patience; submitted to scoldings without returning a word, and when at last the time came that he was dismissed from the *salle d'armes* with his brevet of proficiency at "the point" and "the saber," Jean Cannon had become such a favorite in the regiment that he was nominated by his captain over the heads of a dozen older men for the stripes of a corporal on the day he completed his first year in the service.

And it was on the very next day, when he

went on duty for the first time as a corporal, that the event happened which was to change his whole future life and make him the hero of this story.

### CHAPTER III.

#### AT THE THEATER.

"CORPORAL CANNON is detailed as corporal of the theater guard, and will report to the officer of the day for instructions."

That was what the sergeant-major said on the first morning after our hero's promotion, while he was standing in his place in the ranks at roll-call, feeling very sheepish, and as if every one were staring at his new chevrons, though in truth very few people cared anything about it. Corporal Cannon blushed scarlet when he heard the order. He was only twenty years old, naturally bashful, and the idea of being on duty at the theater struck him with terror and made him excessively nervous.

Among his comrades he knew what he was about and felt at ease; but he knew that the corporal of the theater guard had to speak to every one, ladies included, to know everything, to answer all sorts of questions, to keep his temper under all sorts of little provocations from small boys and men who wanted to get into the theater, and finally to keep order among all the soldiers on leave who were admitted to the pit during the performance.

No wonder that poor Corporal Cannon, green as he was, felt nervous.

After roll-call he sought out his friend Krapp and said to him:

"What shall I do, Krapp? I've a great mind to take off my stripes and go back to the ranks. I'm sure to make some blunder, and then the captain will degrade me."

"And if you do any such thing you're no friend of mine," answered Krapp, sturdily. "What, man! There's nothing to be afraid of. All you have to do is to get the officer of the day to give you full instructions. Then you write them down, learn them by heart and stick to them. Be civil to all, but be as strict as the colonel himself. They've put you on this post on purpose to try you. Be sure you salute all the officers, and make the soldiers respect you. And above all, have your uniform look its best."

So Corporal Cannon, with much inward quaking, brushed himself up and went to report to the officer of the day, whom he found to be a very kind and considerate man, and who told him exactly what to do in the evening and helped him write it down and commit it to memory.

"Remember, corporal," he said, "that all you are responsible for is the order of the soldiers in the theater. Don't let the citizens bother you with questions; but see that the soldiers behave themselves. You will have four men under your orders, and I shall be there among the officers, if you need any instructions. It is your first tour of duty, and remember that a good corporal is better than a bad captain, any time."

So Corporal Cannon departed, feeling much comforted, and ready to swear that Captain Lemaitre was the best man in the army and fit to be a Marshal of France. As the day wore on, however, his nervousness increased, and when the evening came and he took his post in the lobby of the theater in full uniform, with his sword on, after he had placed his men, he was trembling all over with nervous excitement and hardly able to answer a question coherently.

This feeling wore off after a little, for he was kept so busy he had no time to think, and when at last the bell rung for the orchestra to play and he saw the theater crowded with people, the soldiers in the pit as quiet as mice, he said to himself:

"Poaf! what a relief. It's not so hard after all. What a fool I was to be anxious."

Finding, too, that he was not specially noticed in the crowd of uniforms, he lost his bashfulness, and he took courage to enter the theater and assume his proper place near the stage box on one side, from whence he could watch the audience and see the play at the same time, to be prepared to check any disorder, in case of an alarm of fire or other trouble.

The theater was crammed from pit to dome that night on a very interesting occasion, which requires a brief notice.

It was shortly before the Algerine war; and the relations between France and the Dey of Algiers had become so complicated, that an Arab special embassy, headed by the afterward famous Emir Abd-el-Kader, had visited France, some weeks before, and was now returning home by way of Toulon. Attached to the suite of the ambassador, by the special order of his Highness, the Dey, in order to tickle the senses of the French, and dispose them to grant terms to the corsairs, was a strange appendage: none other than a troupe of Algerine *almehs* or dancing-girls, who, as a special favor to the infidels, were allowed to perform in the French theaters, during the ambassador's visit, free of expense.

It was a strange proceeding all through, a regular exhibition of Moslem ignorance and cunning. The Dey, bold from his long impunity in piracy, had grown to think that all the Franks were fools or babies, who could be



pleased with toys and cheated of their rights, while the French on their part, went wild over the novelty of the *almehs* and laughed at the credulity of the Arabs in sending them over to bribe France. Nevertheless, as is always the case before a war between France and a foreign power, the proprieties were very strictly observed and the most extreme respect was shown to the Arab embassy.

Moreover, there was so much that was strange and attractive in the dances of the Arab girls, that everybody went to see them, and they were applauded to the echo.

To be sure it was not dancing in the French sense of the word that was performed by the *almehs*. They never lifted their feet and rarely moved from one spot, save with a slow, gliding step; but they made up for the immobility of lower limbs by a marvelous flexibility of body and arms, seeming as if they had no joints above the waist.

When the curtain rose that evening the French saw a row of girls, swathed in heavy dresses from head to foot, seated in a line on the stage, and heard a strange and somewhat discordant concert from two guitars; an Arab violin with two strings, called a *rebab*; and three tambourines, all accompanied by a low, monotonous chant from the girls.

They yawned over this till the entrance of two dancing-girls, who glided forward with swaying bodies, and executed a pantomime of a lovers' quarrel, about which there could be no mistake, though the words of the accompanying songs were Arabic.

Corporal Cannon, in his place near the stage, looked very much interested, and every one seemed absorbed in the queer dance, when a clash of cymbals was heard without, and a young girl of divine beauty, dressed more richly than all the others, and positively blazing with jewels, darted from the side scenes, clicking a pair of castanets, and dashed boldly between the two lovers, in the character of a rival.

The moment this girl came on the stage there was a hush throughout the theater, for she was as different from the rest as morning from night.

The other *almehs* were dark, most of them with traces of negro blood in their faces; this girl was as fair as any European, with the most delicate of features and great mournful dark eyes, like those of a gazelle. Her movements too, had a certain freedom and grace rarely seen among Asiatics, and she lifted her feet and walked or sprang like a mountaineer.

A thunder of applause greeted her fine attitude as she dashed between the other girls, drawing a little poniard; and the music struck a wild clash expressing alarm and surprise at the tableau.

And then, just as the ballet was about to commence, occurred an interruption so unexpected, that, for the moment, the theater goers were struck dumb.

Out of the orchestra with a bound, the form of a chasseur corporal in full uniform leaped up on the stage, and rushed into the midst of the *almehs*.

There for an instant he stood as if bewildered, staring wildly at the lovely girl who had just entered, and then fell at her feet with a loud cry of:

"*Fifine! Ma Fifine! Je t'ai trouve!*" [Fifine, my Fifine, I have found thee!]

The *almehs* stopped playing, the girl stared at poor Corporal Cannon—for he it was—as if spellbound; and the silence of death pervaded the theater for one short moment, only broken by the low sobs of the kneeling chasseur.

And then suddenly arose such a Babel in that theatre as had never been heard within its walls before.

Colonel Rampon, who was sitting in the stage box along with the Arab ambassador and his interpreter, started to his feet, scarlet to the roots of his white hair, and roared:

"To the guard-house with the scoundrel! Where's the officer of the day?"

Captain Lemaitre, equally angry, jumped up and shouted:

"Corporal Cannon, come off that stage and report under arrest this moment! How dare you, rascal?"

Then all the soldiers in the pit jumped up with a clash of scabbards, roaring:

"Ah, rascal! ah, villain! come off!"

The Arab girls jumped up and huddled together like frightened sheep, appalled at the clamor; the audience began to hiss and stamp; the officers of the regiment, excited at the scandal, shouted to the men to keep quiet, and thereby made matters ten times worse; and in the midst of all the tumult Jean Cannon knelt at the feet of the Arab girl, forgetting everything else, and sobbing aloud:

"My Fifine! I have found thee at last."

As for the girl, she seemed like one in a dream as she stood there. Her mates had shrunk away from her, and she seemed fascinated by the blue eyes of the soldier kneeling at her feet.

She allowed her small white hand to remain passive in his grasp, and stood, trembling violently, in total silence.

Then Colonel Rampon, out of all patience at the tumult, roared out:

"Captain Lemaitre, will you do your duty or not? Arrest that rascal!"

The captain hesitated no longer; but made a leap on the stage and seized the poor corporal by the collar.

"Holla!" he cried. "Are you deaf or mad? Come off that stage and report under arrest. Do you hear?"

Poor Jean Cannon started as if from a dream, looked into the angry face of his officer, and then let go the girl's hand and rose up submissively.

"Yes, my captain," was all he said.

The girl raised both hands to her temples and swept back her long black hair as if trying to clear away something from her brain. She said nothing and made no motion to follow the soldier; but stood gazing dreamily after him, till she saw him descend into the orchestra, take off his saber, and give it up to a sergeant, who beckoned him out of the theater.

Then, as the hubbub subsided, and all eyes were fixed on her, expecting the dance to be resumed, she suddenly threw up her hands and uttered the wild cry:

"*C'est Jean! Oh, ma mere!*" [It is Jean! Oh, my mother!]

And with that one cry, which showed the astonished audience that a tragedy was being enacted behind the scenes, she fell back on the stage, and the curtain was rung down in haste as the frightened girls rushed to assist their comrade.

And then what a buzz of excitement arose throughout the theater, as every one began to discuss what had happened!

The officers and soldiers chattered like monkeys, with the wildest gesticulations, all uniting in abusing the unfortunate corporal, who had broken up the whole evening's entertainment by his ill-timed outburst; while the ladies of the place vowed it was charming, that there was a romantic story behind it all!

"It is perfectly plain," gabbled Madame Boulanger, the grocer's wife, to her friend Madame Ferrier in the dress circle. "The girl is an unfortunate captive to those wicked Arabs, and I hope the Government will make them give her up. That is her brother or her lover, who knows which? It is a shame to punish him for it."

"Ah, but you don't understand diplomacy," returned Madame Ferrier, who, being a notary's wife, was supposed to know all about it. "The girl is in the ambassador's suite, and is sacred from our laws. Don't you see how anxious Colonel Rampon is to explain to the Emir? That is he, sitting in the box by the colonel, that handsome man with the jewels and gold."

In fact, they could see that the old colonel was eagerly talking to the grave, reserved Arab who sat in the box beside him, and whose face, like marble, showed not the slightest trace of emotion during the tumult.

The famous Emir had sat like a statue through all the disturbance, and now, to all the colonel's explanations through the medium of the interpreter, he only replied:

"It is nothing. I know the Frank chief is not to blame. This man is one of those who are afflicted by Allah. We will return to our land to-morrow."

"And I assure you," asseverated the colonel, "that the man shall be punished severely."

The Arab looked at him gravely.

"Will you send me his head in the morning?" he asked, in the coolest manner.

The colonel hesitated.

"No; I cannot do that under our laws, but I will see he is punished."

Abd-el-Kader shrugged his shoulders.

"Without his head all other punishment is in vain. He has dishonored my house and laid his hand on my slave before all the world. His head alone can prevent war between our people. I have spoken. I will go. Allah grant you a prosperous life."

And as he spoke, he rose up, and nothing could persuade him to remain another moment in the theater, while he ordered all his suite to follow him at once to the vessel prepared to take them back to Algiers; and the manager of the house was compelled to come out before the curtain and announce the close of the performance, when the audience slowly dispersed, grumbling and growling, and in particular raining curses on the head of the unfortunate Corporal Cannon, who in the mean time was brooding gloomily in a cell in the guard-house.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### NEXT MORNING.

It came at last, that dismal morning, that changed the whole course of life for our poor hero, and turned him from a happy, careless boy into a man, with a man's load of sorrow on his heart.

He had not slept a wink all that night, since he had been ushered into the bare cell by his old friend Krapp, whose attempt at consolation he had gloomily repulsed.

"Leave me alone. Let me think," was all the Dane could get out of him; and all that long night he had been sitting on the side of his low

cot bed, his chin resting on his hands, brooding over what had happened.

He had not been mistaken; that was one blessing. He had heard Fifine, his lost little sister, with her own lips, call him by name and cry, "Oh, my mother!"

"It is indeed Fifine," brooded the poor fellow; "but where are my father and mother that were taken with her? Dead long ago."

"Alas! they were too old to stand cruelty. And Fifine! what is she now? What is she? Is she still worthy to be my sister, to lend honor to my father's name? What is she among these Arabs? What can she be, but lost to us all forever? Poor Jean! Thou hast no one left in the world to love. Thou art all alone, all alone forever."

This was the substance of his brooding all night, but he rung the changes on it till the gray dawn peered in through the bars of his cell, with all the persistency of a miserable man.

At last he heard the bugles blowing *reveille*, and pretty soon after his old friend Krapp, who was provost-corporal at the guard-house for the night, entered his cell with a mysterious air, whispering:

"It may not be as bad as you think. See! here is a letter for you, and it has come through the colonel's quarters."

Corporal Cannon took the letter, a large sheet of coarse Arab paper, and written in a cramped angular sort of hand, with thick strokes, as if done with a very broad-pointed pen.

It was directed

"Jean Cannon, my brother,  
from Fifine."

Old Krapp looked at the boy narrowly as he unfolded the letter with trembling hands. The Dane seemed as if he wanted to say something, but did not know how to say it.

But Corporal Cannon gave him no chance to speak, as he eagerly perused the strange missive, which ran thus:

"MY BROTHER:

"I write these lines in that language I have not heard for years, and which I have almost forgotten how to speak, since our mother died in a strange land. I knew you the moment you spoke my name, and yet I seemed to be struck dumb, for I knew we had only met to part forever. Jean, my brother, you will never see me again, and it is only at the risk of my life that I send you this letter now, written with an Arab reed pen, by a hand that has not formed a French word for ten years. You must know how I came to be here and all about my history. You shall at once."

"You remember how the Arab pirates took our ship by surprise in the middle of the night, but do not know that our poor father was killed on the ship's deck, after he had tied us both to the hen-coops, and was about to throw us overboard. After his death there was no more resistance, and I found myself surrounded by fierce men with gleaming swords, who threatened mother as she tried to shield me. What had become of you I do not know to this day, for both mother and I thought you had been killed and thrown into the sea, like the men of the crew."

"What happened afterward also I am not clear about, for I must have fallen sick. All I remember is that I woke up one day in a black tent in the African desert, with my mother fanning me, and found out that I had been sold with her as a slave to the young Emir Abd-el-Kader, in whose harem I have remained ever since."

Here Corporal Cannon laid down the letter with a groan, and wiped the sweat from his brow.

"The harem!" he muttered. "Then she is the wife of this Arab. She is lost to us."

He took up the letter again, and the very next words disarmed his fears.

"You must know that all the women in a harem are not the wives of the chief; for his children, sisters, mother, aunts, cousins, servants, are all there. I have been only a humble slave, trained up for a dancing girl, ever since; and the Emir has never so much as looked at me or spoken to me."

"They treated us kindly; for the Emir prides himself on having a happy household, and my mother was allowed to teach me her own tongue, in reading and writing, besides the Arabic I picked up; till the time she died, five years ago. Since then I have never spoken or heard a word of French, till you fell at my feet."

"And now, my Jean, prepare yourself for a strange surprise, which I have known for five years; but which you will learn for the first time. My mother told it to me on her death-bed, and bid me reveal it to you whenever we met; for she had a strange faith that we should meet. In five words then, you are not my brother."

The corporal dropped the letter and started up with a cry of a strange character. Surprise, fear, and something he could not understand, which was very like joy, were blended in that cry.

"Not her brother! Oh, mon Dieu!" he sighed, and then he hid his face in his hands and shook all over with sobs, the last that ever convulsed the frame of Corporal Jean Cannon.

Old Krapp, who had stood apart watching him, curiously, now interposed:

"What is the matter, comrade? No bad news, I hope, in your letter?"

The corporal of chasseurs turned to his comrade and caught his hand, which he wrung hard.

"Oh, my comrade," he said, simply, "I do not know if it be good or bad. The good God will show me in His time. I have lost a sister,



and yet, it is strange, Krapp, that somehow I feel as if a weight had fallen from my heart when I hear the news."

Krapp looked puzzled.

"Lost a sister? Is the Arab girl your sister?"

"No, comrade, no, she is not my sister, and that is the strange thing of it all, Krapp. Why is it, my friend, that I feel glad to hear that she is not? Why?"

Krapp scratched his head.

"I don't know, comrade, unless it is that—*parbleu*—you are in love with her and have just found it out. But what does it all mean? Who is this girl, and how came you to make such a fool of yourself last night before all the regiment?"

Jean Cannon positively laughed in the midst of all his misery.

"I was a fool, was I not, Krapp? They will break me of my stripes; but what do I care now for them? I've found that Fifine is alive, and now I know that, I'll get her back, my friend—yes, I'll get her back even if this Emir Abd-el-Kader hides her behind all the deserts of Africa with lions for a body-guard. Oh! Krapp! I'm so happy at last!"

And this unreasonable corporal of cavalry, there in his prison cell in disgrace, with the certainty of punishment before him, actually hugged the old Dane and danced round the stone floor.

Then he rushed at the letter he had dropped, snatched it up, and began to read again with mingled eagerness and joy:

"You are not my brother!"

"No, Jean, you are not my brother, though I shall always love you better than fifty brothers. This is what my mother told me on her death-bed:

"You are not her son, and she does not even know who are your parents. You were found by the men of the baggage train of our old regiment—the very same in which you are now serving—a poor, deserted little baby in an empty hovel in Italy in the year 1809, as the regiment was marching to the campaign of Wagram. My father and mother adopted you, and never let either of us know we were not brother and sister, but my mother says she is convinced you are of noble birth, for the clothes in which you were dressed as a baby were trimmed with lace and marked with a coronet and the letters J. L."

"That is all she told me, but I have thought over it ever since. You are not my brother, but I shall always love you just the same, though we shall never see each other more in this world."

"Good-by, dear Jean. I write this last in haste, for I have bribed our black slave, Seyd, to take this to the colonel of your regiment, and if I am found out it will cost me my life. Farewell forever."

"Thy loving

"FIFINE."

Jean Cannon devoured the letter to the last lines, and then kissed it reverently and placed it in his bosom.

Old Krapp, in a fever of curiosity to know what it contained, yet forbore to ask any questions till his comrade turned to him with a bright smile and said:

"Well, Krapp, they will break me—is it not so? I shall have worn my stripes for two days and go back to the ranks on the third. But who cares, my comrade? I have found Fifine."

"And who is Fifine?" growled the Dane. "On my word, corporal, you are enough to try the patience of a saint. Here I have not asked a single question, yet I am, though you know it not, interested in your history. Who is Fifine?"

"My faith, I know not."

"You know not?"

"No. That is, I know she is the daughter of the man who was my more than father, Sergeant Cannon, who fought at Waterloo and who was killed on the deck of the brig *Creole*, ten years ago, after he had cast me overboard, tied to a hencoop, to save me from the poniards of the Arabs. But I find from this letter that I was not his son really, but only adopted, and in the mean time, my comrade, I love Fifine, and I am free to marry her when I find her again, even in Africa."

"Talking is cheap," growled Krapp; "if that girl is a slave to the Arab Emir, you will never see her again."

Corporal Cannon's face changed.

"Why not, comrade? The Government will ransom her; for I can prove she is a Frenchwoman by birth."

"But slave to a powerful Arab chief, who is, moreover, an ambassador, and will never give her up, if he knows a Christian loves her. You were foolish, my friend, to show your hand. I saw the face of that chief as you leaped on the stage, and, my faith, it was like the face of the devil himself, as cold and cruel as fate."

The corporal turned very pale.

"Do you mean to say then that he will keep Fifine, and that my Government will not help ransom a Frenchwoman?"

"I mean just that. You will never see your Fifine alive again."

Jean Cannon uttered a cry of horror.

"Alive? Do you mean they will have the heart to kill that innocent child?"

"Rather than give her to you, yes. I know these Arabs."

Here they heard the clank of scabbards and regular tread of feet in the corridor, and Krapp added:

"Here comes the guard to take you to the

colonel. Be quiet and respectful, whatever you do. After all, there are plenty of girls left in the world."

All the light had gone out of Jean Cannon's face as he answered gloomily:

"Yes, it may be so; but there is only one Fifine for me; and I have lost her."

Then the door opened and the guard appeared.

#### CHAPTER V.

##### THE SECOND DUEL.

Colonel Rampon looked very stern and severe as the delinquent corporal entered his room, a little later, and stood stiffly at the door saluting.

The colonel was an ancient martinet and had been wofully scandalized by the affair of the previous night, resulting as it did in the departure of the Arab ambassador, and a report to head-quarters from the inspecting officer of the department that the Seventeenth Chasseurs were in poor discipline. He was writing when the corporal entered, and did not deign to look up, though he was perfectly aware of his presence, but kept poor Jean standing at the door, with his hand at his forehead, for a full minute. Then he suddenly wheeled round in his chair and said sharply:

"Ah! so you are here, are you? A pretty corporal of the guard you have made! What, do you suppose, will become of the army if such things are tolerated? You have brought disgrace upon the colors of the Seventeenth; made us the jest of all France; insulted an ambassador, and all for what? Are you dumb, corporal? Answer! What was the meaning of your outrage last night? Were you drunk?"

"No, my colonel," responded Jean Cannon, in a low voice. "I was not drunk."

"Are you mad then?"

"No, my colonel, I think not."

"Then how dared you interrupt the play by your presence? You, who were charged with preserving order, setting the example of outrage in public! Answer!"

The old colonel sat angrily drumming on the arm of the chair. It was seldom he interfered with any one so low in grade as a corporal, but this was an extraordinary case, and he had made an exception.

The disgraced corporal was very pale. He had always held the colonel in awe and reverence, as a being removed from his own sphere; and the harsh looks of this awful being made him quake all over.

"If I may speak, my colonel—"

"Of course you can speak. My soldiers are my children. Speak out."

The veteran's tones were somewhat milder and they took such an effect on Jean Cannon that he burst out impulsively:

"Oh, colonel, pity me and forgive me. It was my sister, stolen from me by the Arabs ten years ago, and nature proved too strong for me at the shock of seeing her. Oh, my colonel, you do not know what it is to be all alone in the world at ten years of age, to be passed from one to the other like a sheep or a dog, to have no home, no father or mother, not even a name to which one has any right, and then of a sudden see heaven open before you, to find a sister, lost for ten years, and then to see her torn from you forever, and then to know that not even the Government of your own land will interfere to save a French girl, modest and virtuous, from the power of a Pagan Arab. Oh, my colonel, do what you will with me, but pity me! It was my sister and now I have lost her a second time."

The old colonel had listened to him with much attention, and when Jean Cannon had stammered through his little effusion he answered more kindly:

"I am sorry for you, corporal. In fact, I am very sorry; but you forget one thing: a soldier of France must have no family but his regiment, no love but his flag. Suppose you were my son. Do you think that on such a plea I would save you from danger? On the contrary it would be my duty to see you were spared no duty, however hard; and were you to fall on the field of battle, I must not weep for you, save in solitude and unseen. You have made a serious error, committed a terrible breach of discipline; but you are young and have much to excuse you. For this time you are released from arrest. See that in the future you remember that your first duty is to France, and that you cannot yield to private feeling till your duty is all done. Go!"

Jean Cannon stood trembling before the colonel as if dazed.

"And do you forgive me?" he stammered.

"For this time. See you do not abuse my kindness," answered the colonel sternly.

Corporal Cannon drew a deep breath and saluted, as stiff as a post; but his voice was husky as he said:

"Thank you, my colonel. I will try not to do it. Good-day, my colonel."

The veteran nodded and returned to his writing with a muttered:

"Confound the whole business! The poor fellow. I'm sorry for him; but it won't do to show it."

Then Jean Cannon marched out of the colo-

nel's quarters, with his head erect, his chest expanded, saying to himself:

"God bless Father Rampon! Oh, if ever we go to Africa, how gladly I would die for him, ay, fifty times over."

The young soldier was full of good resolutions; and, had it not been for an unfortunate accident that morning, we might never have been called on to record the forty duels of Corporal Cannon.

But such is the irony of fate, that, if a man be doomed to misfortune, she will take any instrument with which to inflict it, and in this instance it came to Corporal Cannon in the shape of a fool, who was also a comrade.

The reinstated corporal had traversed the streets of Toulon, and had been much irritated on the way by noticing that every soldier who passed him looked back after him and laughed.

He bore this well enough, however, until he entered the barracks of the Seventeenth, and had got into the room of his own squadron, where the men were busy cleaning up for morning parade, when he heard a low buzz of laughter round the room; and a tall trooper, Godard by name, called out:

"Here's Corporal Fifine! How is she now, my boy? *Hola, Fifine! have I found thee?*"

Jean Cannon turned as white as a sheet, and his blue eyes glowed with fury as he heard the name of his darling Fifine thus bandied in a barrack-room.

He strode forward to where Godard was sitting, and cried, in a voice husky with rage, "*Stand up, coward!*"

In a moment Godard was up, and in the same moment received a blow full in the face from the young corporal, which sent him over on his bed, his nose bleeding profusely, while Jean Cannon cried in his clear ringing tones:

"Take notice, all my comrades, that if any man calls me Corporal Fifine hereafter, I will cut off his ears, and that if he mentions the affair of last night again, I will kill him or die myself. As for my stripes, let them go. I have spoken."

Then, to Godard, who rose up half stunned, he said savagely:

"I'll meet you this evening. Krapp is my second. At the cemetery."

Godard nodded sullenly and went back to his brushing, while Corporal Cannon took his seat on his own bed in silence, and set to work burnishing up his buttons and buckles as if nothing had happened.

There was a silence in the barrack-room for some time after that. The men had, in truth, been discussing the affair as a good joke on the poor corporal as he came in; and he was too great a favorite for them to pursue the subject now they found he took it in such deadly earnest.

Moreover, the reputation of the young corporal as the best fencer that had been turned out of the *salle d'armes* for ten years had a good deal to do with the quiet that reigned in the dormitory of his squadron.

That day passed peacefully; and in the evening Corporal Cannon and private Godard were missing from roll-call, having gone on a little visit to the cemetery.

Just as the last beams of the setting sun shone on the cemetery corner, two men in their shirt sleeves crossed sabers for a few passes, and Jean Cannon, with a rapid feint and a vicious slash, shore off the right ear of his antagonist and leaped back to his guard with the angry cry:

"I told you so. Now, taunt me again!"

But Godard had no inclination to do anything of the sort.

He threw down his sword with a grimace of pain and observed:

"Enough is as good as a feast, corporal. I've lost my ear, but you'll lose your stripes."

Jean Cannon laughed bitterly.

"I know it. I only wish I'd not let you off so easily. But it is for the last time."

He threw down his own sword, without even the ordinary formality of shaking hands with his antagonist, and went back to the barracks alone, where he was reported absent without leave and ordered to pay a visit to the captain in the morning.

That visit terminated in Jean Cannon coming out of the captain's room with a gloomy frown on his brow, and going straight to his cot in the barrack room, where he took off his jacket and quietly ripped off the chevrons that had marked his three days' rank.

No one made any remark about it, for the expression on the young soldier's face was such as to discourage jokes at his expense, and, after all, his comrades liked him for what he had been before his fall.

But that night, for the first time since he had joined the regiment, Jean Cannon was seen in the great *cabaret* or drinking-house, frequented by the toppers of the garrison, and old Krapp, who had sought him out, found him drinking hard, though, to all outward appearance, as sober as a judge.

From that day forth Jean Cannon lost the name he had acquired in the regiment of a good fellow, and became noted as one of the most morose and unsocial of mortals. The only friend who stuck to him through good and evil



report was old Krapp, the Dane; and the two became famous as the heaviest drinkers in the regiment.

The wine never seemed to make them unsteady on their feet, and they were always good-natured in their cups.

But at other times, when both were sober, it was hard to tell which was the most surly, Krapp or Cannon.

They had no friends save each other, and the only thing that kept them from quarrels with the other soldiers was the fact that both were held in terror as the best swordsmen in the regiment.

But none the less, they found their position unpleasant, for every one shunned them, the officers treated them severely, and only the native Danish caution of old Krapp kept him from losing his stripes as Jean Cannon had done.

So matters went on for some months, during which Jean Cannon went from bad to worse, when, like a fresh breeze dissipating the fogs, came the news to Toulon that the Government had decided on an expedition to chastise the Dey of Algiers; that thirty thousand infantry and ten batteries of artillery had been detailed for the service, but that only one regiment of cavalry was to be allowed, which was to be composed of volunteers, and denominated the Chasseurs of Africa.

In a single day, as it seemed, all the ill-humor born of idleness vanished from among the soldiers at Toulon, and Jean Cannon, with his inseparable friend, Corporal Neil Krapp, were among the first to volunteer to go with the new regiment.

"We shall be among strangers, father Krapp," said Jean Cannon, hopefully. "No one will know me or my history, and no one will be able to taunt me about my poor Fifine. Alas! shall I ever see her again?"

"No," answered Krapp, gruffly; "you never will, and the sooner you make up your mind to forget all about her, the better for you. Here am I, an old reprobate, nearly worn out; yet I don't grumble, though in one night, twenty years ago, I lost all a man can hold dear, and was left for dead besides. Well, I'm glad there's to be fighting again, for I'm tired of this way of living."

In about ten days' time came the list of the accepted names for the new African Chasseurs, and among the first were those of Krapp and Cannon, who, on the very next day, left the barracks of the Seventeenth and repaired to the camp at Marseilles, where the new regiment was being organized.

It was on a warm spring day in April, 1829, that the comrades entered the camp, and were at once to be off to the first squadron.

#### CHAPTER VI. THIRTY-SIX DUELS.

THE camp of the First Regiment of African Chasseurs was situated on a sandy plain, surrounded by the tents of infantry and artillery regiments, while the discipline, as is usual in hastily organized expeditions by French troops, was decidedly loose.

The guards were excessively strict with the members of other regiments than their own, and scarcely a night passed but a man was killed or wounded by some sentry, in running the guard to procure liquor.

This bred bad blood between the regiments, as it was looked upon as a deliberate murder, through jealousy of rival corps, and especially was the feeling bitter between the men of different arms of the service.

The soldiers of the single cavalry regiment, being alone, one to thirty, were the particular object of hatred to the infantrymen, and the very night before our hero's coming to the camp, a general assault had been made on the cavalry camp after midnight, by a crowd of infantrymen, who had actually fired a volley into the tents and run away.

The only way the commandant of the camp had prevented a general mutiny on that night had been by causing the bugles to sound "To arms!" and so keeping the different regiments standing in line all night long.

The very same men who would sneak out after taps, bent on mischief, stood as patient as lambs in the ranks, after once that call sounded in their ears.

When Jean Cannon and Neil Krapp joined their squadron it was near sunset, and the men, having no horses to clean—for the corps was as yet dismounted—were cooking supper or smoking their pipes.

The two comrades found their new friends a bronzed, sturdy looking lot, for this afterward famous regiment was composed entirely of veterans, picked for smartness.

They were assigned to a tent and mess, had a hearty supper, and then Krapp observed:

"Well, comrades, we've no stable-call to-night, and the best thing we can do is to pay a visit to the *cantiniere* (sutler). For my part, I was paid yesterday and my money is burning a hole in my pocket till we have all drunk to better acquaintance."

The Dane noticed as he spoke an uneasy silence among his new comrades; and one of them said in a hesitating way:

"Don't you know how we stand, comrade?"

"Stand? How do you mean?"

"Why, we have no sutler of our own yet, so we have to depend on the sutler of the Forty-fifth Infantry in the next camp."

Jean Cannon interrupted him.

"So much the better. I like the infantry well enough. It's not their fault that they can't ride. We can't all be cavalymen."

"Besides," observed old Krapp gravely, "there is an advantage in getting drunk outside of one's own regiment. The provost guard will only put you outside the lines, instead of locking you up for the night."

"That's all true, comrade," replied the *chasseur*, whose name was Blondel, "but that is not the worst of it. Do you know what happened last night to us?"

"No. How should we?"

"It has been kept very quiet; but the fact is that the Forty-fifth and the Seventieth regiments turned out in the darkness, and riddled our tents with bullets. If the general had not ordered the *appel* beaten, we should have had a bad affair, for we were surprised."

Jean Cannon had listened attentively, and now he asked with great eagerness:

"Are you joking with us, or is this a simple story of facts, comrade?"

"It is the simple fact. Therefore, you see, we cannot afford to go to their sutlers, or to drink with them to-night. It would be too great a temptation to these mud-mashers to set on us and inflict some outrage. We are all about here, you see, without even a horse to charge with on the rascals."

"Nevertheless," said Jean Cannon with an obstinate set of his jaw, "my comrade Krapp and I, desiring to drink a bottle of wine together, are going over to the sutler of this Forty-fifth regiment; and if any of you gentlemen wish to come along with us we will make it a bottle apiece."

And he rose to his feet amid the wondering stares of his friends, while old Krapp muttered:

"He should be a Dane. It is singular. That is the regular Berserker spirit. He shall not say old Krapp was not willing to get killed beside him."

He rose to his feet and took Jean Cannon's arm.

"It is perfectly true, comrades," he said. "We who volunteer for Africa don't care much for our lives. I go with my friend. Let who will stay behind."

Up jumped Blondel.

"You are a pair of madmen, who want to throw away your lives," he exclaimed; "but you shall not say we deserted you. We'll all go in a body, and if these mud-mashers want a fight, by the gods they shall have it."

His words excited immediate enthusiasm, and, in a little while afterward, more than a hundred cavalry soldiers, all in full uniform, with their swords under their left arms, were sauntering across the dividing line between their camp and that of the Forty-fifth Infantry, the single sentry on that side having orders to pass all men to the sutler's till after tattoo.

They noticed that he scowled at them, for he was an infantry man, and they noticed also that little groups were forming in all the company streets on the other side of the color line, watching them curiously.

The sutler's tent of the Forty-fifth Infantry was a huge marquee, big enough for a circus, and meant to hold large crowds. It was full of little tables, all of which were empty at the time the cavaliers flocked into the tent; and they had no difficulty in finding plenty of room as they sat down and called for wine, coffee, or absinthe, as their tastes led them.

Outside of the sutler's tent was a broad open space—the parade ground—and beyond that the tents of the regiment of infantry.

They found the *cantiniere*—who was a woman, as usual in French regiments—very civil, but nervous, for she saw from the defiant demeanor of the cavaliers that they had come over prepared for a fight if need be; and she hurried her waiters on to give them all they wanted and take the money quickly, while she dispatched a secret message to the colonel of the Forty-fifth to ask him to come over or take precautions against another riot, as she feared.

But, before her messenger could return, the men of the Forty-fifth began to drop in, by twos and threes, and one might notice that every man had on his belts and bayonet, an unusual thing at a sutler's tent.

The poor *cantiniere* was now in a flurry, and ran about from table to table, serving as fast as she could. She had not taken in so much money in a month; but at the moment felt as if she would gladly give it all to get these men safely out of her place.

Yet so far, nothing had occurred to mar the harmony of the evening. The place was full of men, smoking, drinking and chatting in the most polite manner, and the only peculiarity noticeable was that the two arms of the service kept separate from each other, and that cavalry men and foot soldiers alike entirely ignored each other's presence.

Thus matters lasted for about ten minutes, till the tables were all full, and a large number of

men were standing all round; when a tall burly sergeant of infantry, who wore the crossed swords of *maitre d'armes* on his sleeve, strode down among the cavaliers, and said loudly:

"These confounded manure-shovelers have no manners. They crowd us out of our own canteen. See here, young man, I want a seat. Do you hear me?"

There was instant silence throughout the tent, for the soldiers seemed disposed to trust the issue now to a single champion, and had plainly chosen the *maitre d'armes* to represent them.

The person he addressed, as it happened, was our hero, Jean Cannon, whose boyish and innocent face had caused him to be singled out by the bully of the regiment for the trial.

Jean Cannon looked up at the *maitre d'armes* amid profound silence, and asked:

"To whom have I the pleasure of speaking?"

"To me, Gasparin, *maitre d'armes* of the Forty-fifth of the line," responded the other fiercely. "Come, no nonsense, chicken! I want that seat."

"Why, certainly," answered Jean Cannon, with the frank open smile of a child. "When such a famous swordsman as you asks me for a seat in so polite a manner, I ought to rise and say with a bow: 'Monsieur Gasparin, honor me by accepting my chair.'"

He suited the action to the word, while a low hum of dismay went up from the cavaliers, and the foot soldiers smiled and said:

"He has done it. They will run."

But Sergeant Gasparin, who accepted the courteous tender with a gratified grunt of triumph, found out his mistake later.

He turned his back on Jean Cannon with a growl of contempt, and proceeded to sit down in the chair the other held with so much complaisance, when it was suddenly pulled from beneath him; then brandished aloft by the sturdy *chasseur*; who brought it down into slivers on the head of the *maitre d'armes*, as he sat on the earth, crying:

"And that is the way I give it to you, coward!"

The blow was so severe that it knocked Gasparin senseless, and in a moment every soldier was on his feet, swords and bayonets flashed in the light, amid the screams of the terrified *cantiniere*, and a bloody riot was imminent, when the loud blare of the bugles and the deep roll of drums beating the *appel*, or call to arms, sounded through the tent, just as the colonel of the Forty-fifth, in his full uniform, with his sword drawn, rushed in, followed by his adjutant, roaring:

"To the colors, rascals, to the colors! What are you at it again?"

Such is the magic of discipline that in a moment the infantry soldiers ran out of the tent, rushing to the stacks of arms on the color line as fast as they could go, while the colonel, coming forward, shouted, angrily:

"And you, cavaliers, to your quarters! You who are so anxious to fight your brothers, we'll see if you'll face the Arabs as boldly when you meet them in Africa. Madame Bigot, close the canteen at once. No more wine to-night. Be off, all of you."

The cavaliers were awed by the presence of an officer; for a colonel in the French army is a very high personage, with three battalions of a thousand each under his orders, and the gulf that separates him from a private *chasseur* is immense.

They went slowly out of the tent and home to their quarters, where they suffered no molestation, while the unfortunate men of the Forty-fifth were kept at the stacks all night long, and got not a wink of sleep.

Next day, while Jean Cannon and Krapp were cooking their soup, about noon, a corporal of the Forty-fifth came over into their quarters, and was welcomed with effusion by Krapp.

"Very glad to see you, comrade. You shall see that we of the cavalry are not such hogs as they have in your regiment. Sit down and have some of our soup. It is nearly ready. Eh, my faith, but we laid out that terrible bully of yours last night, didn't we?"

"This man, I believe," said the infantry corporal, looking at Jean Cannon, "is the one who struck Sergeant Gasparin from behind. I am instructed to say that our sergeant will waive his superiority of rank and meet your friend, in an hour from now, in a nook among the *dunes* we will show you."

"A charming invitation," cried Krapp. "We shall be delighted. What shall we bring?"

"Sabers, if it please you. Our sergeant is an expert, but wishes to give you every chance."

"We will follow you thither," answered Krapp, with the utmost politeness. "And now, comrade, share our soup, for it is ready."

But the corporal would not touch the soup; and it was not half an hour after when they saw him arm in arm with Sergeant Gasparin saunter through the camp and take the road out to the sand-hills, or *dunes*, among which the third duel of Jean Cannon was about to take place.

It was short and decisive, for the infantry sergeant, though an expert with the saber and small sword, was not used to the peculiar dashing style which old Krapp, the Dane, had taught



Jean Cannon, and which the latter had improved by his native suppleness and vigor.

Inside of three minutes the sergeant made a false cut, and received a long slash from the saber of the young soldier, which stretched from the left shoulder down to the right hip, like a bandolier of blood.

The poor man uttered a sharp cry, dropped his sword and fell on the sand, when his antagonist helped him up, and observed to the corporal:

"Tell your comrades not to despond. I have beaten their best man; but I am still open to more matches with you rats of the rampart. It's not your fault you're not in the cavalry. You would be, if you could. 'Learn to fence better.'"

He was quite sober that morning, and in his bitterest mood.

As he walked away with Krapp, the Dane observed gravely:

"You shouldn't have said that, unless you wanted to be killed. Your words will be all over the camp, and there are twenty other infantry regiments lying round us, each with a fencing-master and a dozen provost corporals, ready to take them up."

Jean Cannon laughed bitterly.

"Let them all come, one after the other. I want to die, Krapp, and I care not how soon I go. I hate these French. Their nation let my Fifine go into the power of an Arab; when, by saying the word, they might have claimed her and made me happy. Let me die anywhere, so long as I die in the act of killing one of the men who refused to help me save Fifine."

Krapp looked curiously at him.

"One would think that you were not French, to hear you talk," he said.

Jean Cannon laughed again, still more bitterly.

"Who knows what I am, Krapp? Found in a ditch, with no father and mother! God knows if I come even of honest parents! No, no, I shall never know who I am; for all the clew I have at this day to my identity is two letters marked on a baby's shirt."

Krapp started slightly.

"Two letters! What letters?"

"Oh, what consequence! Let them go with the rest. Born to misfortune, doomed to misery, let me live out my life as I will, Krapp. Fifine is gone, and life without her has no pleasure but in a fight. Let me have my pleasure."

And he had it to his heart's content, as Krapp had prophesied he would, after his affair with Maitre Gasparin.

The bitter words of Jean Cannon had been reported by the corporal and his friends, with variations, to every infantry regiment in the expedition, and that evening the daring young soldier received visits from no less than six *maitres d'armes* of different organizations.

A single interview will serve as a fair sample of all.

Jean Cannon and old Krapp, sitting with their chasseur comrades round the fire, observed a little party of infantry soldiers and non-commissioned officers approaching them, with the most friendly expression.

"Whom seek you, comrades?" Blondel was generally the first to inquire.

"We seek the chasseur, Jean Cannon," was the invariable answer; and when he had been shown to them, the spokesman of the party inquired:

"Is it possible that this is the chasseur who has uttered such a boast?"

"What boast?" Jean would ask.

"Eh, *parbleu*, we are informed that you have stigmatized us men of the line as rats of the rampart, and told us we ought to learn to fence. Is it true?"

Then Jean Cannon would laugh.

"*Morbleu*, as to rats of the rampart, that is a trifle; but as for learning to fence, that is a thing you infantrymen will never do till a cavalryman teaches you."

This retort invariably enraged—as Jean intended it to do—the infantrymen; and the spokesman of the party always ended by proposing that their *maitre d'armes* should take—or give—a lesson in fencing to the audacious chasseur next day, at sunrise or sunset.

Before the evening was over Jean Cannon had six affairs on his hands, at the rate of two a day, to last him for three days; and every one of these duels was fought, as arranged, with the saber, between Jean and the fencing-master of a different infantry regiment. In every affair the saber was the selected weapon, and in every one, to the amazement of the whole camp, the young chasseur was victorious over the best men that the infantry regiments could furnish.

It may be thought strange that such a crop of duels could be possible in a camp where the orders were so strict against any combat of the kind; but the solution of the mystery is to be found in the peculiar code of honor in the French army, from the highest to the lowest.

It was regarded as a point of etiquette for officers to close their eyes to all evidence of dueling, however plain, and to accept any excuse, however lame, for the absence of a man from duty after being wounded.

The quantity of strange accidents that were

invented to account for divers slashes bestowed by the saber of Jean Cannon, during the period of his residence at the Camp of Algiers, would have puzzled the wits of any but a French soldier; and as time went on, they became more numerous.

For, be it observed, when once the jealousy of infantry against cavalry is roused, especially in France, nothing can appease it.

The exploits of Jean Cannon and his uniform success, without a scratch, roused in the fencing-masters of the infantry regiments a perfect frenzy of exasperation and injured vanity. They felt that their reputation as masters was at stake; that it was absolutely necessary at all hazards to punish this insolent recruit, who was not even a veteran, much less a master; but who nevertheless defeated masters, without so much as getting a scratch.

Therefore, as day after day went on, the messages came thick and fast, and so used did Jean Cannon become at last to the routine of fighting, that he was wont to pay three visits a day to the quiet nook among the sand-hills where the affairs were settled, and, before three weeks had passed, he had crossed swords with every master in the Algerian expeditionary corps, and wounded every one more or less severely.

Then, when he had disabled his last opponent—who hailed from the artillery—with a slash across the shoulder, he threw down his sword and made this proclamation aloud:

"Messieurs, this makes thirty-eight duels I have fought, and for my part I am tired of it all. I am sorry that I ever said a word against the men of the infantry, whom I have found to be brave men. Henceforth I declare that I will never cross swords with a brother Frenchman, unless he forces a quarrel on me by a blow, and I trust to show you all that Jean Cannon can be as true a comrade against the Arabs as he has been a bitter foe on the field of honor."

It was another remarkable fact in the mental composition of the French army that this speech repeated from man to man with every form of exaggeration, changed the feeling of every man in the expeditionary corps toward the audacious chasseur and made of him a hero and a general favorite. Possibly the fact that his last antagonist had been in the artillery aided to soothe the vanity of the French soldiers of infantry, for Jean Cannon was at once dubbed "The Invincible," "The man of thirty-eight duels," and from henceforth the feeling between the cavalry and infantry became the best possible.

It was about time for this result, for in two days after the last duel the expedition set sail for Algiers and the war began.

#### CHAPTER VII.

##### AMONG THE ARABS.

FIFTEEN months have passed away when we next come on our hero in the midst of the labors of actual warfare with a wily and dangerous foe.

Algiers had been taken, the Arabs driven to the Atlas, and the French troops had occupied the whole country, which had been parceled out in tracts to a number of imaginary French colonists.

The reason we call them "imaginary" will appear in the course of this story.

Out in the great plain of Bou Farik, (the son of Farik) lay the white tents of an encampment surrounded by low earth-works, while long lines of horses at the picket ropes inside the works proclaimed the presence of a cavalry regiment.

In the middle of the camp, before a large marquee, floated a flag, which bore the inscription, "First Chasseurs of Africa," and indicated the colonel's quarters, guarded by a sentry.

Outside the earth-works lay a vast plain, stretching on all sides like a sea for thirty or forty miles, and bounded by blue chains of mountains, with traces of snow on the loftier peaks.

The resemblance of this plain to a sea was increased by a covering of tall grass, fast turning yellow in the scorching sunlight, and waving in long billows whenever the breeze passed over it.

Above blazed a fierce sun from the midst of a sky of the most intense blue, and hot quivering streams of air rose from the plain on all sides, making the landscape tremble in the light.

Here and there in the midst of the sea of the yellowish grass one might behold little islands, from which rose clumps of date palms, and near some of these clumps were square patches of white wheat and barley, without a vestige of fence round them, only marked out from the grass by their different color. Such was the plain of Bou Farik, and the wheat fields were those sown by the Arabs before the French landed, and now in nominal possession of their foes. We say "nominal" possession, for the French had already found by experience that they could not expect safety outside of their fortified camps, and all the colonists who had come over, armed with big official parchments from His Majesty King Charles X, were careful to live in the city of Algiers and never visited their allotments at Bou Farik till it was

time to gather the crops under the escort of a brigade of troops.

So that, practically, the First Chasseurs had the plain of Bou Farik all to themselves—and the Arabs.

But where were the Arabs?

That was the very question asked by a young corporal of artillery, who had come in from France the day before, with a battery of brass guns, to the camp at Bou Farik, and had seen no enemies yet.

He was sitting on a hay-bale at the end of one of the camp streets in the midst of a group of the chasseurs, and he asked the question of a stout, thickset young fellow, whose chevrons and crossed swords on the sleeve showed him to be a corporal instructor-at-arms of the chasseurs.

"Where are all the Arabs, Corporal Cannon? They told me the country was full of them, and we've not seen one."

Corporal Cannon smiled. He had become very brown since he had come to Africa, and his beard had grown to respectable proportions. He no longer looked like a boy.

"Don't be disconsolate, my chicken," he said with the sarcasm of a veteran of war record. "These Arabs have a way of being felt before they are seen. You'll find where they are, soon enough."

"Ay, ay," growled another corporal, a grizzled veteran of large frame, "if you want to find them, my chicken, take Neil Krapp's advice, and don't look for them; you won't need to go a quarter of a league from here to feel and see all you want of Arabs—guns, sabers, horses and all."

The artillery corporal stared all round him at the plain, and then shrugged his shoulders and said, a little pettishly:

"You are pleased to jest with me, because you've been three months in Africa. I have as good eyes as any one here, and I swear there's not an Arab on this plain, nor anywhere nearer than the mountains, if indeed there are any there."

Old Krapp laughed, and so did all the rest except Corporal Cannon, who said with a kindly gravity:

"Corporal Gautier, you are mistaken. There are at least a thousand Arabs with their horses, scattered all over this plain. There are at least fifty in that clump of palm-trees, within gunshot of your battery."

Corporal Gautier looked at him with some contempt.

"Why are you lying to me?" he asked. "Do you think I am a fool? I can see."

Jean Cannon flushed slightly, but kept his temper as he replied:

"Corporal Gautier, you are mistaken. I will not say you are lying, because that is not a word for one French soldier to use to another in the presence of the enemy. You are wrong to use it."

Gautier sneered openly.

"I have used it nevertheless. If you wish to take notice of it, I can handle a sword, even if I be not an instructor. I warn you that I have already defeated three antagonists, one of them a corporal of dragoons."

The chasseurs became very silent now, and looked uneasily at Jean Cannon, who had turned paler than usual.

Old Krapp alone muttered to him a few words in a strange tongue, and then the chasseur answered quietly:

"Corporal Gautier, I repeat that you were wrong to accuse me of lying, and I think you would not have done it had you not been fresh from France. Here in Algiers we have enough to do, fighting the Arabs, without fighting our comrades about nothing."

"Fighting Arabs!" repeated Gautier, with a sneer. "A poor excuse is better than none. I tell you I don't believe there is an Arab within ten leagues of our camp. I came through yesterday with the battery and Legal's brigade, and we saw not the sign of an Arab on the way. I repeat that you are lying about the Arabs."

As he spoke, he swaggered insolently before Jean Cannon, and a quick flush crossed the chasseur's face.

With wonderful self-control, however, he replied, as calmly as ever:

"Corporal Gautier, I have a better way of proving that I am no liar than by fighting you. If you will dare to ride your horse to water with me at the well in that clump of palms, I warn you that you will find Arabs enough, and that you will never let your animal drink at the well."

Gautier looked at him with intense scorn; for he believed Jean Cannon was trying to cover his retreat by a ruse.

"If I were not fresh from France and an expert with the sword," he said, "I would strike you in the face, and so drive you away. As it is, I'll put you to shame before all your comrades. I will ride down to that well alone, or with you, as you please, and I will water my horse there. Now, what say you?"

Jean Cannon bowed his head quietly.

"I say I am sorry to have to shame you; for you will have to apologize to me in less than half an hour. I am glad you did not strike me, cor-



poral, for I have sworn never to fight another Frenchman unless he strike me; and I do not want to kill you."

"To kill me!" echoed Gautier. "It will take a *maitre d'armes* to do that, my brave chasseur. Come, let us take our horses. I am impatient to have done with a fellow of your kidney."

As he spoke he went to the picket line of his battery, which was close by, and led out his horse, a stout, heavy animal, on which he vaulted, with a halter and blanket, all unarmed.

"Come, I am ready," he exclaimed, as he saw Jean Cannon deliberately saddling and bridling a light, speedy-looking barb, and buckling on his weapons. "I am going to water my horse; and on my return I shall thrash you for a liar and a coward, or ask you to do the same to me."

Old Krapp, who, with the other men, was standing by, watching, cried out:

"Best not boast too much, my friend. I have seen pride get a fall before this. Put on a saber, if you must go."

Gautier laughed scornfully.

"You can't scare me. I can eat all the Arabs on this plain without salt."

He was turning his horse to gallop off, when Jean Cannon suddenly shouted:

"I'll bet you a month's pay you don't water that horse at the well, and that I do water mine."

"Done!" shouted back Gautier; and then he galloped away, laughing.

Now it happened that the well of which both spoke was the one at which all the horses of the camp were wont to water, and there was a regular beaten track to and from it.

Gautier saw the track, and he remembered to have watered his own horse there that very morning, in complete security, in company with all his comrades.

What he did not know was that, prior to going to water, two squadrons of the chasseurs, with a couple of guns, had been deployed in front of the well to avoid danger.

Jean Cannon tightened his girths, mounted his horse, and trotted tranquilly after Gautier out of the camp gate.

It was not against orders to go, for the colonel had never conceived it necessary to warn men against what every chasseur who had been a week in camp knew to be a foolhardy exploit, full of needless danger.

So Corporal Gautier, fresh from the Paris garrison, galloped gayly out of camp over the sun-baked road, and rapidly approached the clump of date palms, muttering:

"These African's think they can fill us from France with their silly stories. I'll show them they can't deceive Gautier."

Thus he traversed half the distance that separated him from the clump of palm trees, a dead silence reigning on the plain round him, when he suddenly started and dodged as:

"Crack, crack! Piou! Piou!"

Two little puffs of white smoke from the yellow grass, both behind him, and the unmistakable hum of bullets over his head, making him bow gracefully as if saluting the balls.

"There are Arabs!" he thought to himself, and all his courage was oozing out when he turned his head to look behind him and spied Corporal Cannon, at an easy canter, coming along the road to meet him.

"I may have time to run the gantlet and swear I've watered the horse," thought the artillery corporal hurriedly. "They will ridicule me unmercifully if I do not make the attempt. Oh, if I had only brought my weapons!"

He was no coward, and he showed it now as he urged on his horse to full speed. He had come into full view of the well when out of the date palm clump, as if they had started from the ground, galloped a dozen Arabs, firing their long guns, and dashed at him, yelling like fiends.

Poor Gautier, unarmed, could do nothing but turn his horse and flee, while the Arabs, with a shrill yell of triumph, came racing after him on their lean barbs, and he could hear their hoof-beats getting nearer and nearer as his horse panted and labored. Once in flight, the imagination of the best of men overcomes him, and poor Gautier gave way to his fears and rode on yelling: "Help! help! The Arabs! The Arabs!"

In his terror he did not even notice Jean Cannon till the latter passed him and fired a pistol at the Arabs who immediately halted and wheeled their horses.

Then poor Gautier galloped on, shrieking for help, and ran right into the midst of a whole platoon of chasseurs, who were trotting out to meet the Arabs, with their muskets out on the right thigh, ready for instant use.

The demoralized corporal did not know that this was the picket reserve, hastily turned out by the officer of the day, who anticipated a dash of the Arabs, and was trying to head it off.

He only thought that the Arabs were behind him, and rode into camp, where he jumped off his horse and ran to his own battery, still shrieking:

"The Arabs! The Arabs!"

He was only recalled to his senses by the peals of derisive laughter from the men of the next squadron of chasseurs, who had swarmed out of their tents to look at him, and now saluted him with all sorts of gibes.

"This is the man that never saw an Arab."

"Did you water your horse, Gautier?"

"How many duels, my brave boy?"

"He wants to fight Corporal Cannon."

"Cannon would cut his head off."

"Room for the gentleman from Paris."

"Wait till Cannon comes back."

Poor Gautier writhed with shame as he came to his senses in safety, and realized that he deserved all these taunts; but before he could answer a word, he heard a great shout, and saw the chasseurs run to the edge of the battery, jump on the parapet, and stand there, yelling and waving their caps toward the plain, where an exciting scene was being transacted.

The picket reserve that had trotted out so quickly to the rescue of the two madmen as every one thought them, had deployed into a skirmish line, and was firing away at quite a respectable crowd of Arabs, who were galloping in from all quarters of the plain, leaving the clump of date palms quite deserted.

As poor Gautier, crimson with shame, turned to look, he saw a single chasseur, on his horse, in the middle of the palm trees, the animal quietly drinking, while the rider was leveling his musket—for the chasseurs carried infantry muskets—at some of the Arabs, engaging his comrades.

Then, while every one was watching him, they saw him pull up his horse's head, throw his musket to his back, draw his long saber, and come tearing through the midst of the Arabs to join his comrades.

As he passed through the midst of them several men galloped to intercept him, and two at least crossed sabers, as they could see the flash of steel.

In each instance the Arab fell from his horse, and the chasseur galloped away unharmed to be received by his comrades, and covered by a furious file firing.

Gautier heard a voice shout out:

"Hurrah for the whitehead! That's the very trick I taught him!"

He looked round and spied gaunt old Krapp waving his cap excitedly as the whole party of chasseurs fell back at a walk to the camp, halting to fire every few yards, and followed at a distance by a cloud of Arabs that must have numbered near two hundred.

And then, as the picket guard came near the ramparts, now lined with hundreds of excited chasseurs and artillerymen, the bugles sounded "To arms!" and Colonel Bugeaud, gray-headed and stern, rode out from before his tent, while the officers went galloping to and fro, and the whole camp became a scene of bustle and excitement, in the midst of which Gautier was too busy getting to his post in the battery to take notice of anything but his duty.

When at last all was hushed into the stillness of discipline, and the whole camp was under arms, the Arabs had vanished, and Corporal Cannon rode in from the gate at a sharp trot and took his place in his squadron as if nothing had happened.

The sharp eye of Colonel Lemaitre was on him, however, and as soon as the parade was dismissed, which was in ten minutes after, that officer called out: "Corporal Cannon will report in arrest, and be reduced to the ranks for leaving the camp without orders."

And that was the way Jean Cannon lost his chevrons of corporal a second time.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE TWO CORPORALS.

THAT evening Jean Cannon, smoking his pipe in his shirt sleeves in the guard tent with all the philosophy of an old offender who cared nothing for an arrest, was all at once aroused by the voice of the sergeant of the guard calling out:

"Chasseur Cannon, you're wanted at the colonel's tent."

In a moment all Jean's philosophy had vanished, and he jumped nervously up and knocked the ashes out of his pipe, saying:

"Oh, sergeant, for heaven's sake let me go and dress myself decently. I'm not fit to go before Father Bugeaud."

"Father Bugeaud" was the pet name given the colonel by his men, who fairly adored him, while they were mortally afraid of his displeasure, and Jean Cannon was no exception to the general rule.

He would sooner have faced fifty Arabs alone than have been summoned before Colonel Bugeaud.

"The colonel has sent orders that you are to come at once," answered the sergeant gruffly. "If you don't look decent it's your own fault. You might have known such an exploit as yours of the morning could not be passed over without notice. You'll catch it, I can tell you."

So poor Jean Cannon, in his stable dress of shirt and trowsers, his face and arms dirty, and his hair all rough, had to be marched to the colonel's quarters between two trim chasseurs, growling under his breath at the harsh sergeant all the way, and getting paler and paler as he

neared the dreaded presence of "Father Bugeaud."

When he got into the tent, however, the first object that caught his eye was the trim soldierly figure of Corporal Gautier, of the artillery, standing before Colonel Bugeaud looking very red, while the stern face of the commander was set in a frown that boded no good to any delinquent who came in his way.

When the chasseur entered and stood at attention, fidgeting nervously, Colonel Bugeaud looked from one to the other, and at last growled out:

"Well now, what's all this about? Tell me, one of you, for I swear I don't understand how it came about. Chasseur, who sent you here in your stable dress?"

Jean Cannon saluted stiffly.

"Sergeant of the guard, my colonel."

Father Bugeaud frowned.

"He did, did he? Here, orderly!"

The orderly appeared in a moment.

"Tell the officer of the day, with my best compliments, to reduce the sergeant of the guard to the ranks for disrespect to me in sending me a prisoner in stable dress."

"Yes, my colonel."

Jean Cannon felt more at ease when he heard the order, but he became as stiff as a post while awaiting further questions.

"What's your name?" pursued the colonel.

"Jean Cannon, my colonel."

"For what are you in arrest?"

"Absence without leave, my colonel, at the morning's alarm parade."

Father Bugeaud frowned deeply.

"A grave offense. Where were you?"

"Outside the camp, my colonel."

"What business had you outside? Do you not know the danger?"

"Yes, my colonel."

"Then why, I ask, were you out?"

"I was watering my horse, my colonel."

Colonel Bugeaud started up, and his face changed to astonishment.

"Watering your horse! What! are you the madman who brought on the attack of the Arabs?"

Jean Cannon was silent.

"Answer me, I tell you," cried the colonel angrily. "Did you go out alone, and thus bring on the alarm this morning?"

"No, my colonel."

"Then who was with you?"

"I cannot answer, my colonel."

"Why not?"

"Because I am only responsible for my own actions, my colonel."

Colonel Bugeaud looked from one to the other, and then broke out:

"What is all this mystery about? Corporal, do you know anything of this? Why did you come to my tent and ask to speak to me, if you did not? What is all this about?"

Poor Gautier, now as pale as death, yet found breath to murmur:

"My colonel, it is all my fault. I am a fool, that could not tell a brave man from a coward, and I have caused the punishment of a grand soldier, who should be decorated for courage to-day."

He stopped, and Father Bugeaud said in a much more kindly tone:

"You are proving yourself now a braver man than you think, corporal; for it requires much courage to acknowledge a fault, as you are doing."

Here Gautier burst out eagerly:

"Indeed, colonel! I will tell the truth. It was all my fault. I had seen no Arabs, and I thought the chasseurs were laughing at me when they said the country was full of them. I called this brave man a liar, when he told me of the danger, and I wagered a month's pay that I would go out alone and water my horse at the well in the palm grove. I challenged him to fight me, and he refused. I called him a coward, for which I beg his pardon now, before you. What was the result? I rode out, was chased back into camp like a hare; and this brave man saved my life, scattered the Arabs, watered his horse, and won the wager, for which he has been punished, because he was one minute late for the alarm parade, which I caused by my madness. That is all, my colonel. Punish me, and restore this brave chasseur to the rank he lost through me."

Father Bugeaud listened attentively till Gautier had finished, and then turned to Jean Cannon, of whom he asked:

"Is this true, chasseur?"

"Nearly true, my colonel."

"How nearly true?"

"Simply this, my colonel. I did not save his life. It was the picket guard did that, and I deserve my punishment for being taunted into neglecting my duty and alarming the camp to win a silly wager."

Corporal Bugeaud turned away to hide a smile.

"You are a pair of fools," he said gruffly; "and there is only one thing I can do with you both. Chasseur, report to your captain, and tell him I request him as a favor to remit you the punishment you deserve. As for you, corporal, go to your battery and learn to be a



man, or you'll never be a sergeant. Now get out, both of you!

Both men wheeled about, saluting, and left the tent; and no sooner were they outside than Gautier caught hold of Jean Cannon's hand and cried earnestly:

"Oh, my friend, how can I ever forgive myself for this? You are a hero, a demigod."

Jean Cannon laughed with his usual good nature.

"I am sorry I cannot return the compliment, for you seem like a big boy. But seriously, my chicken, did you know, when you swelled so much this morning, who I was?"

Gautier looked puzzled.

"Who you were? Why no, who are you?"

"And have you made no inquiries?" asked Jean, still more curiously. "Did not Krapp or any of them tell you?"

"No, comrade," answered Gautier honestly. "I have been too much ashamed to look at a chasseur, much less speak to one."

Jean Cannon regarded his new friend with much more favor and muttered:

"He looks honest. He is not lying. No, he is really a brave man."

Now Gautier in his turn became curious.

"What do you mean, comrade? Who are you that you ask if I know you?"

Jean Cannon laughed as they approached the street of his squadron, saying:

"Yonder comes old Krapp. Ask him. I must report to Captain Lemaitre."

As he knocked at the door of his captain's tent, Gautier asked the old Dane:

"Please tell me, comrade, is there anything in Corporal Cannon that is remarkable? He told me to ask you."

Krapp stared and grinned.

"Remarkable! I should say so. He is the only man I ever knew who has fought thirty-eight duels—thirty-six with *maitres d'armes*, and never so much as received a scratch."

Gautier listened amazed, and when he had finished ejaculated:

"Thirty-eight duels! Masters! Not a wound! Then, had I fought him, he could have carved me like a chicken."

"Precisely, my little cabbage. But he would not fight any one now, save for a blow. He swore that after his last duel."

"Oh, Monsieur Krapp, what a fool I have been!" ejaculated Gautier, fervently.

"My infant, thou hast reason to say so; but we can not all learn wisdom at twenty."

Here Jean Cannon came out of his captain's tent, holding up his head and looking joyful, to whom Gautier ran and knelt at his feet, crying:

"Oh, Monsieur Cannon, forgive me!"

"Corporal Cannon, if you please," rejoined Jean stiffly. "I am restored to my grade. Yes, I forgive you, if you'll get up and make no more nonsense about here. Besides, I am going to see the colonel as soon as I can get my uniform brushed up."

Gautier got up, but he seized hold of Jean Cannon's hand and asked eagerly:

"Comrade, will you do me a favor?"

"What is it, corporal?" asked Jean coldly.

"It is this. I am going to take off my stripes and ask leave to exchange into your squadron to be near you. I want to prove to you that I am not the base wretch you must think me."

Corporal Cannon and Krapp both smiled.

"You are not a wretch," growled the Dane; "only a spring chicken. You'll be good enough after you've been properly cooked."

"And as for exchanging into my squadron," remarked Cannon, "you'll not find a chasseur willing to go into a battery, so you'll have to ask the commandant now, while he has power to order the transfer."

"Will you intercede for me, comrade?" asked Gautier timidly.

"Parbleu, speak for yourself," observed Krapp gruffly. "You were bold enough to go to the colonel alone. Go again, if you wish to get into our squadron, my chicken."

Gautier turned away resolutely.

"I'll do it, comrade. I can never be happy until I have ventured my life to aid Corporal Cannon."

As he went away old Krapp remarked:

"There is stuff in that boy. He'll make a good soldier yet, Jean."

Jean Cannon shrugged his shoulders.

"We shall see. For my part I hate these men that are so eager. They remind me of what I used to be!"

"And does that displease you?" asked the Dane.

"Yes," growled Corporal Cannon, with a heavy frown. "I hate the past. I live only to kill and be killed. You know that, Krapp!"

And he stalked off to his tent, leaving the Dane shaking his head and muttering:

"He has the very tones of the Lindholms. That is the way Count Mathias looked when he went out to fight his last duel for the Italian opera singer. I wish I knew and could prove his birth. But he is impenetrable."

Meantime Corporal Cannon, having put on his best uniform, and burnished all his brass and steel accouterments, took his way to the tent of Colonel Bugeaud.

"I have a note from my captain," he said

to the orderly, and was soon after admitted once more to the awful presence.

He found Colonel Bugeaud smoking a long Arab pipe, with a gloomy expression of face, and the veteran greeted him with:

"Well, corporal, what is it? Captain Lemaitre asks me to grant you a visit. Is it about to-day's affair? That's settled."

"No, my colonel."

"Then what is it about?"

Corporal Cannon fidgeted.

"My colonel—I hope you will pardon the liberty I take—"

"That depends. What do you want?"

"Permission to volunteer, my colonel."

"Volunteer for what?"

"To carry a dispatch to General Bon, my colonel, that's all."

Colonel Bugeaud put down his pipe and stared hard at the corporal.

"Who told you I wanted to send a dispatch to General Bon?"

"Captain Lemaitre, my colonel. Pardon, but it was not his fault. I had to beg him to let me come. All the men adore you, my colonel, and we know in what a bad position you are, surrounded with the Arabs, with a magazine to protect and not a battalion of infantry. We know that if General Bon knew your position, he would send reinforcements; and we know that your good heart keeps you from ordering any man on such a dangerous errand. Very well, my colonel. I told my captain that if he would trust me out with four men whom I would pick, I would deliver a dispatch to General Bon before dawn. That's all, my colonel."

It was the longest speech Corporal Cannon had ever made, and he stood surprised at his own eloquence. Colonel Bugeaud said nothing for some moments after; but smoked away at his pipe in reflective silence.

At last he asked:

"Am I to understand that you offer, with four men, to cross thirty miles of country, all swarming with Arabs? It is impossible."

"On the contrary, my colonel, I will do it to-night, if you will let me try."

"To-night?"

"Yes, my colonel. It would indeed be quite impossible in the daytime."

"Aha! I see," said the colonel, in a more confident tone. "A ruse of war, a little surprise. That is your plan."

"A plan that will succeed, colonel, if I can pick my men, old rats of the guard-house, who know the way to steal the cheese."

"And who are your men?"

"One of them is Krapp, a Dane, and my fellow corporal. The next is Blondel, a man of my squadron. The third is my friend, Pierre Broche, and the fourth I shall pick out when I get back with my permission."

"Well," returned the colonel, presently, "I give you leave to try. It is now an hour to sunset. Get ready and I will have the dispatch for you. Let each of your men have a copy, in case one or more are killed on the way."

"Very good, my colonel."

Corporal Cannon faced round and returned to his squadron, where he found Gautier in the dress of a private chasseur, dancing about and crying out:

"Laugh at me as much as you please. I deserve it all. But I'll show you I am worthy to belong to the squadron."

"Why, Gautier," asked Cannon, "did you get permission to transfer?"

"Yes, I tell you," cried Gautier, eagerly. "I teased my captain till he consented, and he let me go to the colonel. I am a full chasseur at last, and I will never leave you till I have shown you what I can do."

"Very well," answered Jean Cannon, in a tone intended to discourage Gautier, "I am going out to night with only four men to take a dispatch to General Bon. The country is full of Arabs, and it is probable that we shall all be murdered. Let me see if you dare make one of the four."

Gautier turned a shade paler.

"Is there much danger?" he asked.

"Plenty of it. In fact, we have only one chance of getting through in a thousand."

"Then I go," answered Gautier, quietly. "It is the chance I ask for."

#### CHAPTER IX.

#### THE NIGHT RIDE.

COLONEL BUGEAUD, his usually stern face very grave and kind in expression, stood in front of his tent that evening at sunset with a bundle of papers in his hand, talking to his adjutant, and waiting for the volunteers to come up.

"It is a desperate undertaking, Jabot," he was saying, "and I could not find it in my heart to order any one out on such service; but if they get through alive, it may save us the necessity of abandoning this camp."

"I hope things are not so bad as that, colonel," said Captain-Adjutant Jabot. "Now that we have the battery, all the Arabs on the plain of Bou Farik cannot put us out of here."

"Ay, but there is an enemy more potent than Abd-el-Kader, Jabot."

"And his name, colonel, is?"

"Hunger, my boy?"

"But we have a full magazine."

"For the men, yes. But we have twelve hundred horses in camp, counting the train and the battery, and there is not a bale of hay left, after to-morrow's ration is eaten up, my friend."

"But the plain is full of grass, colonel."

"True, but to reap that grass and corn will cost a hundred lives, unless we have a battalion of infantry to put on guard. No, no, Jabot. Make no mistake: If Bon sends us a battalion, we can cut the hay and save this station for the winter. If he does not, we must abandon it."

"But he will, colonel."

"He will if he knows our straits. But to send a dispatch through by daylight in the face of these Arabs would require a guard of two-thirds my force, and the brown devils would swoop down on the camp as soon as our backs were turned. No, this corporal's offer is our only chance to avoid evacuating Bou Farik and leaving the crop to Abd-el-Kader."

As he spoke they saw a little group of chasseurs ride out of one of the squadron streets, headed by a corporal, who got off his horse in front of the colonel's tent, and came up with a respectful salute.

"We are ready, my colonel."

Colonel Bugeaud looked at him closely.

"You are a young man for a corporal. How long have you served?"

"Not quite two years, my colonel."

"And your name is Cannon. Where have I heard it before?"

"At Toulon, I fear, my colonel. You did not join the regiment till the close of my career in the Seventeenth."

And Corporal Cannon looked down as if he felt ashamed of himself, as, in fact, he did, when he remembered Toulon.

Colonel Bugeaud ruminated.

"I forget now. Had you any nickname then? I remember them best."

Jean Cannon colored deeply.

"Yes, my colonel. They called me at first Corporal Ffine, and after I joined the Africans I got the name of the Man of Thirty-eight—"

"Duels! Yes."

Bugeaud started and looked curiously at the kindly-faced corporal.

"What! Are you the man that fought so many duels? Comrade, there must have been some grave cause to make a man like you so reckless. I hope you are not quarrelsome. I hate this silly dueling business."

"No worse than I, my colonel. I swear to you I have never challenged any man to fight. I have only defended myself."

Bugeaud shrugged his shoulders.

"Thirty-eight duels are too much for a peaceable man. But come; here are your dispatches. See if you can fight Arabs as well as you have fought comrades. Are those your men, out there? I will inspect them."

He walked over to the little group and looked at them all closely.

To Krapp he said:

"You look pretty old for an affair like this."

The Dane grinned broadly.

"It takes an old fox to steal the hens from a roost while the farmer watches."

The colonel laughed.

"Perhaps you're right."

"Hola!" he cried to Blondel. "Do you suppose you can fight an Arab in the dark and get out alive?"

"I can at least die trying, my colonel."

He nodded approvingly to Broche, who was a bronzed, athletic fellow, but when he saw Gautier, he frowned and said:

"You are too young and green for this. How come you here?"

"To save the life of a better man for France," answered Gautier simply; and the reply pleased Bugeaud so much that he nodded kindly and answered:

"God speed you, my boy. Here, take these dispatches, and if any of you get killed, let the rest make for General Bon's camp as best they can. The road goes straight and you cannot miss it, if the Arabs will let you keep it."

He handed each one a dispatch, shook hands with Corporal Cannon, and then the little quintet rode slowly off to the gate of the camp, just as it was growing quite dark.

At the gate they halted, and Jean Cannon said to his men:

"Dismount and tighten your girths. We have a long gallop before us, and it is not yet quite dark enough. While we wait, I will tell you how we will act."

The men dismounted and girthed up the horses another hole or two, while the audacious corporal pursued:

"As soon as it's dark the Arabs ride up close to our parapets, and patrol up to the very gate. Look out there!"

He pointed to a fitting white figure that glided swiftly across the plain, as if flying through the air.

"That's the white cloak of one of them, on a dark horse. Yonder are more. The plain is full of them. Now, we've two chances; if any of us could talk Arabic we might pass for one of their scouting parties—"



"But we don't," gruffly interrupted Krapp. "Hold your tongue, Krapp. I know that. Well, there's another chance. We must teach the Arabs French. Who plays the bugle-calls?"

"I do," cried Gautier eagerly.

"The very man we want. Here is a bugle I borrowed from the trumpeter and chief. We will go out as a regiment. Krapp, you will command the first squadron, Blondel the second, Broche the third, and you, Gautier, will be the colonel's trumpeter."

"Eh, *morbleu*!" cried Broche, "what is all this? Who, then, will play colonel?"

"Eh, *parbleu*, Colonel Jean Cannon, at your service," cried Cannon gayly. "Now, gentlemen, mount your squadrons, and we will charge out on the rascals."

The others, half catching the idea, hesitated, when Jean Cannon sprang on his horse, and bellowed:

"Squadrons, prepare to mount!"

"I see," cried Gautier eagerly; and with that he set his bugle to his lips and blew the regular regimental call, "Prepare to mount."

It needed no more to give the cue to the quick-witted Frenchmen behind him.

"First squadron! Prepare to mount," roared Krapp like a bull.

"Second squadron, prepare to mount," howled Blondel, in the very voice of Captain Lemaitre.

"Third squadron, prepare to mount!" shrieked Broche, in the shrill treble of another well-known captain.

"Mount!" bellowed Jean Cannon, and the bugle repeated the signal, while his three comrades made it sound as if the whole regiment was mounting up for a sally.

The chasseurs inside the camp, with the same native quickness, aided the deception by raising a great shout, while Gautier, by a sort of inspiration, screamed out:

"Cannoneers and drivers, mount! Forward, trot, march!"

"By fours, trot, march!" roared Jean Cannon; and his faithful followers repeated the order, one after the other, as these five men trotted out into the darkness, and laughed to see the white cloaks of the Arabs flitting away in dismay before them, as the dark sons of the desert fancied that the whole force of the camp was coming out to chastise them for their temerity.

"So far, so good," quoth the corporal, as the lights of the camp faded away and they found themselves trotting along the white road to General Bon's fort. "But we must keep up our noise, or they will come close and find out how few we are."

Then, exerting his voice to the utmost, he roared out, as if to a regiment:

"In each squadron, form platoons, gallop, march! Close up there! Close up!"

Gautier blew the signal four times over, in different keys, as if four trumpeters were at work; Blondel, Broche, and Krapp, shrieked, bellowed and roared their orders to imaginary squadrons; and Gautier capped the climax by yelling:

"Form sections, gallop, march! Let the caissons follow the pieces closely."

As they galloped away after this, they could not help laughing at the entire success of their stratagem; for the plain seemed to be entirely deserted on either side, though they could see, far ahead, some flitting white figures, hurrying to warn the other Arabs.

They kept along at a steady pace, most of the time at a sharp trot or hand gallop, till they had covered more than ten miles, when they saw, far ahead of them, a dense body of Arabs, gathered round the square dark outline of what they knew to be a block-house, one of those built by General Bon a few weeks before, and garrisoned by a company of infantry.

"Here the plot thickens," observed Cannon sententiously. "If we try to charge these fellows, they'll find out who we are. We must go out into the grass and give them time to get frightened before we come on them."

As he spoke he rode out into the long grass, which was here almost up to the backs of the horses, and almost instantly concealed them from sight.

They rode along in single file, bending down on the necks of their horses, and imitating with a boldness that no one but Jean Cannon could have shown, the tactics of their desert foemen on a raid.

The very audacity of their change of plan aided its success; for, as they stole along they could see the white cloaks of the Arabs in violent commotion, as the horsemen rode to and fro, uncertain what had become of the regiment they believed to be coming along the road to meet them.

The regiment had vanished; but where had it gone to?

Scouting parties of Arabs dashed down the road, and scoured the grass up to the edge of the block-house, while the five daring chasseurs crept along a good mile off on the flank, past the block-house, and had the satisfaction of finding that the Arabs were in their rear at last.

Then they halted, and Jean Cannon gave his orders to his friends.

"We have ten miles more to go, and if we can get to the road we can keep ahead of the Arabs. Now is our time to give them a last fright. Get your muskets ready."

With their pieces erect they marched on toward the road, till they could see the bewildered Arabs clustering together again, uncertain whether to advance or retreat.

"Form column of squadrons," bellowed Jean Cannon at the top of his voice, over the silent plain. "Fire by squadrons! Commence firing!"

Gautier sounded his bugle in five keys, and the chasseurs fired three volleys at the Arabs, first with their muskets, then with their long pistols, aiming at the white cloaks.

The effect of these volleys from a quarter so unexpected, completed the demoralization of the desert horsemen; for the men in the block-house opened fire at the same time.

The Arabs shot off a hasty, ill-directed volley, and fled like the wind, while several riderless horses came galloping up to the chasseurs, neighing wildly, and as much bewildered as their masters.

"Catch the horses and run," yelled Corporal Cannon, and no difficulty was experienced in so doing with the docile Arab steeds.

Five minutes later, the chasseurs were galloping away, full speed, on the deserted road, each leading a horse, and within an hour after they saw fires gleaming ahead of them and heard the sharp challenge:

"*Halte! Qui va la?*" [Halt. Who goes there?]

"Friends of the First Chasseurs," shouted the daring corporal. "Dispatches for General Bon, my friend. We have fooled the Arabs!"

As he spoke they drew up, just in time to escape a bullet from the vigilant infantry outpost, and after a close examination by the corporal of the guard, to make sure it was no Arab trick, they were admitted to the outposts, and taken in triumph to the presence of General Bon, a grizzled and red-faced veteran of Waterloo.

When the general had read the dispatches with great attention he turned to Corporal Cannon.

"How many men have you?" he asked.

"Four, my general."

"Only four! and how did you get through?"

"In faith, my general, we made the Arabs think the whole regiment was behind us and I took the liberty to play colonel for one night. The Arabs are learning French very fast, my general."

The general looked at the bronzed face of the daring corporal with a good deal of admiration as he said:

"Corporal, you have done something that should earn you a third stripe to-night, if you behave well. Do you ever drink Macon?"

Macon is one of the pleasantest of the wines of Southern France and Jean Cannon grinned broadly.

"Macon is good, my general, when one cannot get Chablis or—"

"*Peste!*" cried the general, laughing. "We are in Africa, corporal, not Paris. Here, go to my steward and tell him that you and your comrades are to have a bottle apiece to help you pass the night in comfort."

"Pardon, my general," returned Jean Cannon, "but though Macon is good I have my duty to attend to. I am ready to go back as soon as I get my dispatches."

The general shook his head.

"No, no, corporal. Such a risk must not be run twice over. I am going to Colonel Bugeaud's camp myself as soon as the sun is up and you can march with us. Go and finish the wine with a clear spirit, for you deserve the indulgence."

Jean Cannon, relieved in his mind, saluted and departed to his friends whom he found nearly asleep outside the general's quarters, but who roused up very quickly when they heard they had no further to go that night.

Under the guidance of the general's orderly they fed and stabled their horses with great care; for the Chasseurs of Africa had already learned the Arab lesson that a cavalier must be one with his horse, and that, if the beast suffer, the man will be useless in war.

This duty attended to they passed a jolly night with the general's head-quarter guard and listened to the bustle outside which lasted till daybreak and announced that the troops were about to move.

In the early dawn of next morning, two battalions of infantry marched out of General Bon's camp in the direction of Bou Farik, and at the head of the column following after the leading colonel's staff rode our five chasseurs.

The country looked deserted around them, but, as they traversed the white road, they could see the white cloaks of Arabs in the distance flitting to and fro, observing them; but not venturing near enough to exchange shots with the infantry of whom the desert warriors already stood in awe. An hour before sunset they came in sight of the camp of Bou Farik, and just as the shades of twilight gathered over the earth, Colonel Bugeaud shook hands

with Colonel Legal of the Forty-fifth of the line and said heartily:

"Welcome, my friend. Your arrival has saved the post. To-morrow we will reap the hay and the corn, and let Abd-el-Kader stop us if he can."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE BLOODY HARVEST OF BOU FARIK.

EVERY one at Bou Farik supposed that when two battalions of infantry were added to the chasseurs, there would be no further trouble about reaping the harvest on the plain. So confident were the French that about a hundred of the "citizen colonists" who had been keeping little shops in Algiers took advantage of the escort of the troops to come on and claim their "rights."

They had parchment deeds to the whole plain emanating from Paris, and they now demanded protection while they reaped the hay harvest, which had grown up under the protection of Providence.

The hay thus cut they proposed to sell to the French Government at a handsome price and thus make a nice little profit at each end of the bargain; for they paid the soldiers nothing for cutting the hay.

They had done this the year before, and it was only necessary to repeat the operation.

This year, however, they had overlooked a person who also claimed a right in the harvest, on the plea that his people had owned the land for five centuries at least.

This person was Abd-el-Kader who at this time began to rise into prominence as the avenger of Islam against France.

On the morning after Colonel Legal with the Forty-fifth Infantry came to Bou Farik the camp was aroused at daybreak by the sound of dropping shots, and the amazed French saw the whole plain covered with parties of Arabs, galloping to and fro, trampling down the long grass and skirmishing boldly up to the very lines of the infantry.

It was obvious that the Arabs were under some new and energetic head, so that the French commander was forced to act with promptitude to drive them off.

Leaving four companies of infantry to guard the camp, Father Bugeaud sallied out with all the rest and opened a furious fire, scattering the Arabs in apparent dismay, when the "colonists" sallied out and began to cut the hay as fast as they could.

The whole of the cavalry was dispersed with a long skirmish line to inclose the scene of the harvest and on them the brunt of the action fell, for the Arabs seemed to have little fear of them.

Corporal Jean Cannon, with his four comrades of the previous night, found themselves on the most remote post of all and noticed that the Arabs were gathering in wild groups and seemed resolved to break in the line somewhere near them.

"What say you, Krapp?" asked the reckless corporal, pointing to a knot of white cloaks under a clump of date palms. "If we don't scare those fellows they will charge in on us in a few moments. If you will follow me we'll drive them off."

Krapp shrugged his shoulders.

"We are two: they have six in a group. It may be an honorable way to get killed, but we shall leave a hole in the line."

Corporal Cannon turned his head to look behind him and answered:

"Not a bit of it. There is an infantry line right behind us. To tell you the truth, Krapp, I am tired of these corporal's stripes, and I mean to turn them into epaulettes, or go into the hospital to-day."

Old Krapp looked disgusted.

"I thought you had more sense. What good are epaulettes to a man like you or me? We have nothing to live for, and should only get drunk and lose them before we'd had them a week. Let the epaulettes go."

Jean Cannon made a grimace.

"Well, then, to be frank, I want to get even with those brown devils for stealing Fifine. I see in that group a fellow who has a gold sleeve to his cloak and a plume to his turban. He must be a chief, and I want to have a bout with him."

Old Krapp growled out a curse.

"You're never tired of dueling. Take my advice and keep in your place. You'll fight one duel too much yet."

But Jean Cannon would not be dissuaded from his project. Not caring whether it were against orders or not he pitched his musket to his shoulder, fired a shot into the group of Arabs he had noticed, and then rode out of the line, drawing and waving his saber as if defying an Arab to single combat.

At the time when he did this there was a lull in the firing, and his shot attracted general attention from both sides.

No sooner did he ride out than the Arabs raised a general yell, in the midst of which the chief, with the gold-embroidered sleeve to his bournous or cloak, galloped out of the clump of date palms and came gallantly on to meet him.



The challenge and its acceptance were in the true spirit of Arabian chivalry.

The two horsemen approached each other in the midst of an open plain and presented a strong contrast in their types of Moslem and Frank.

Both were well mounted, for the African chasseurs had already found the excellence of the barbs as war-horses, and Jean Cannon had changed his own troop horse for one of the captured steeds of the previous night.

The Arab and he both rode bays with black points, slender and vigorous.

Jean Cannon, in his simple uniform of dark green laced with black, his scarlet kepi and trousers lending color to the picture, was compact and serviceable all over.

The Arab, in his flowing robes of gay colors, was splendid and imposing to the last degree.

Both had their long muskets at their backs, and each had a saber in his hand.

The Frenchman's blade was the straight sword of his regiment, ground as sharp as a razor, while the Arab bore a curved cimier, which he waved defiantly.

Pretty soon they came up to each other, when Corporal Cannon noticed that his antagonist, instead of the usual dark face and gleaming black eyes of the Arabs, had a countenance whiter than his own and large fierce blue eyes.

He had no time to note anything more, when the blue-eyed Arab made a swinging cut at his head, stopping it before it met the opposing blade, and changing it to a slash at the leg, which he actually succeeded in touching, cutting through the thick leather reinforce on Jean's trousers and drawing the blood freely.

Such a thing had never before happened to this redoubtable master of the sword, and what added to his mortification was that his own return blow, which he dealt full at the Arab's face, missed its mark as the other ducked his head with a laugh, his horse carrying him out of danger in another moment.

Jean Cannon, the victor of thirty-eight duels, had been wounded by a wild Arab that had never taken a lesson in arms!

The corporal of chasseurs ground his teeth and wheeled his horse to close with his wily antagonist, but the blue-eyed Arab avoided the shock with another laugh, and proved so much the superior in horsemanship that in another moment he had come upon Jean Cannon's left rear, and had the saber lifted over the Frenchman's head threatening to cut.

Now, the left rear of a man on horseback is his one weak point, for he cannot cut back with any effect at his enemy, and can only guard his head with extreme difficulty.

Jean Cannon was too old a cavalier not to know this, and he wheeled his horse round in a moment to get out of the scrape, but not before he had received another light slash, this time, to his intense mortification, on the back, while he had not yet been able to cross swords with the Arab.

His last wheel, however, accomplished this object, and as he made a thrust at his foe the blades clashed.

In the same moment Jean Cannon closed in and rained a shower of blows on the Arab, who seemed to become confused at the style to which he was unaccustomed; and the end of it was that Jean got in a single blow at the other's head, which, had it not fallen with the flat of the blade, would have cloven his skull in two.

As it was, the chief cut back in the same moment, with a fierce Arabic oath, and Jean Cannon saw him reel in his saddle and fall on his horse's neck just as he felt a sharp slash on his own forehead, and the blood poured down over his eyes, blinding him completely.

He made his sword play instinctively round his head in moulinets, and let his horse carry him where it would. When he came fully to his vision at last, he found himself in the midst of a crowd of Arabs, whither the horse had carried him, and his late antagonist was calling out something to men in white cloaks, who were pointing their muskets at the chasseur.

Jean saw that he was in a bad scrape if he did not get out very quickly, and, if it had not been for that blinding blood, would no doubt have got off.

But as it was, before his horse had taken a dozen bounds, he found his sight failing again, and in another moment he was plucked from his horse by a noose skillfully thrown from behind, and the hero of thirty-eight duels was knocked senseless by the shock.

How long he lay there he could not tell, but it could not have been long, for the blood was still wet on his face when he looked dizzily up and saw above him the waving stems of the date palms, while the cracking of firearms was quite lively all around.

Corporal Cannon, with all his recklessness, was no fool, therefore he lay still as if dead, and presently had the satisfaction of hearing the loud cries of his own comrades, who came charging up into the date clump, when he rose on his elbow and saw that the Arabs were running away.

He struggled up to his feet, feeling very sick and dizzy, and old Krapp galloped up, leading his horse and shouting:

"Get up, get up. They're coming back. We have no time to lose."

Jean scrambled up on his horse with some difficulty and cast a hasty glance over the plain.

A crowd of Arabs, numbering several hundred, was gathering behind the gold-sleeved chief and evidently preparing to charge.

"Get back to the reserve. You're only fit for the hospital. I told you you'd fight one duel too much," cried Krapp, excitedly. "We shall have hard work to stop those fellows."

And in fact within a few moments after the Arabs made a desperate charge under the lead of Gold Sleeve, driving back the thin line of chasseurs like chaff, and only repulsed at last by the steady fire of the infantry support, while Jean Cannon, for the first time in his life, had to sit on his horse, weak and powerless, looking on at a battle in which he felt he was no longer fit to take the part of an able-bodied man.

When it was over at last he rode slowly off to find the surgeon, who washed and bound up his wounds, and observed:

"You have had wonderful luck to-day, corporal. Any one of these wounds, an inch nearer would have disabled you for a long time. As it is, you can go on duty to-morrow if you wish. They are only flesh wounds. This on your forehead is the worst, for it will leave a big scar, but it will not hurt you."

Jean Cannon inspected his face in the little hand-glass of the surgeon, and found that the Arab's saber had sliced a piece of flesh off his forehead, close to the roots of his hair, and the strips of plaster made him a singular object.

"And can I go on duty to-morrow, doctor?" he asked curiously.

"If you please. To-day you feel dizzy, but that is only the fall from your horse. It will wear off after a night's sleep. In the morning you will be all right."

Corporal Cannon went away to his tent and took no further part in that day's encounters. He had had enough and felt intensely angry with himself that he had permitted an Arab to get the best of him.

"It was all through feeling too sure," he said to himself. "I thought I could deal with him as I dealt with the others. It was a regular duel and I may as well own it. Corporal Jean Cannon you have met your match at last in an Arab chief, and your honor will never be satisfied till you are even with him. I can beat him when we meet. I'm sure of it now, for I know his points. I must keep him at close quarters. And to think that I, Jean Cannon, the man of thirty-eight duels, should have let a sword turn in my hand and strike with the flat of the blade. You deserve it all for your clumsiness, Jean."

Thus he continued scolding himself in the solitude of his tent, while the plain of Bou Farik was the scene of an animated contest all day long.

At sunset, with a great creaking of wheels and cracking of whips, the whole wagon train of the garrison at Bou Farik rumbled into camp, piled with hay in enormous loads, most of it only half cured, and Colonel Bugeaud remarked to Colonel Legal:

"We have collected to-day about one hundred tons of hay. Do you know how much it has cost the Government?"

"My faith, nothing but the cutting."

"You are mistaken. I have just been making the calculation. It has cost the state one day's wages for twenty-five hundred men, with their officers, and eighteen hundred horses. I have not had time to bring it down to the exact figures; but, as near as I can get at it, I find this hay will cost France about forty sous a pound, besides the risk of its all spoiling before it be eaten. The only consolation I have is that we have here twelve day's rations for all our horses, and that within a week we shall gather enough for all the winter."

Colonel Legal looked out over the plain.

"We've driven off Abd-el-Kader, anyway. If the hay costs us forty sous a pound it has cost him as much to lose it."

"That is another consolation. Besides, we can afford it better than he can."

That night the camp at Bou Farik was roused three times by night attacks, in one of which a party of Arabs actually rode in over the parapets, at an unguarded point, and stampeded the horses of the train, shooting several teamsters and escaping unhurt.

At the head of this party was recognized, by the light of a bonfire, the golden-sleeved chief who had made so much trouble the day before; and he had the audacity to throw a lighted torch into Colonel Bugeaud's tent as he dashed through the camp, reckless of the shots whistling round him, setting fire to the dry canvas and consuming the whole structure.

The exasperation of the French was so great that the commandant ordered out the whole force in the morning, with the battery, and prepared for a general engagement.

But when they went out and drew up in line on the plain not an Arab was to be seen and the vicinity of Bou Farik was to all seeming entirely deserted.

Disappointed in getting a battle out of his wily foes Bugeaud yet determined literally, to make hay while the sun shone and ordered out

all the train, followed by the colonists and the camp idlers who cut and loaded up another hundred tons of hay in a few hours.

Corporal Cannon, who found the doctor's words verified, went out as usual on duty and the French had begun to grow careless thinking that the Arabs had left the plain. The wagons were all loaded at noon and had started on their march to camp, when the crackle of fire-arms was heard on the cavalry picket line and a dense body of Arabs made their appearance as if by magic coming out of all sorts of unexpected places and came rushing down like the wind on the train.

So furious was their charge that they broke through the line of chasseurs, set even the infantrymen into a panic, and, before the latter could form a square had penetrated to the wagons.

What followed for some minutes was a scene of wild confusion and random firing.

When the hubbub subsided the Arabs were in full flight, leaving twenty or thirty dead and wounded behind them, but the whole wagon train was a mass of smoke and flames, with the teams plunging frantically to get loose.

## CHAPTER XI.

YUSUF BEN SAADI.

AS had been the beginning of the bloody harvest of Bou Farik so was it to the close of a week of constant strife and alarms.

When at last the hay and corn were gathered into stacks within the line of works, the French had lost fifty men, killed, wounded or missing, all their wagon train was more or less damaged by fire, while at least two hundred horses had to be shot to put them out of their misery.

But the post of Bou Farik was safe for the winter, and the Arabs had also lost a great many men and horses in their perpetual raids.

At the head of all their attacks, and seemingly proof against steel and bullet, the blue-eyed chief with the golden-sleeved bournous had been a conspicuous figure.

Who he was, none of the French knew till the harvest had been gathered, when the chief himself was seen riding toward the gate one morning, followed by a party of warriors, one of whom bore a white flag.

The young Arab was mounted on his beautiful bay horse, dressed with his usual splendor, and carried a hawk on his wrist, in token of his rank and peaceful intent.

He was met at the outposts by an officer with a party of chasseurs; of whom Corporal Cannon was one, and made the usual Arabic salutation: "Peace be unto you."

By this time some of the French officers had begun to learn Arabic, and each regiment had several interpreters, so that there was no difficulty in opening communication with the chief.

He announced himself as "Yusuf ben Saadi, chief of the tribe Bou Farik, come with a message from the most valiant Emir Abd-el-Kader to the chief of the Franks."

When asked to state the message, he said that it could only be done personally, as Abd-el-Kader was too great a man to treat with any save the head of his foes.

After several messages to and from Colonel Bugeaud, he was finally admitted to the presence of the French chief, to whom he explained his mission as follows:

"Abd-el-Kader, Emir of the Allied Tribes of the Desert, sends greeting to the Frank chief. We are all children of Allah. Why should we quarrel over a few loads of hay any longer? The great Emir is tired of fighting, and wishes to make peace, for why should men strive against what is written in the book of Allah?"

Colonel Bugeaud politely replied that he "had not begun the war. The Dey of Algiers had made war on peaceable French sailors, and had been punished for it. Now the country belonged to France. If Abd-el-Kader wished to make peace let him come in and surrender. The French would treat him well and confirm him as chief of the tribes who had banded together with him, if he would swear to keep the peace."

Yusuf ben Saadi listened respectfully and then answered through the interpreter:

"The French chief is old and wise. Yusuf is but a boy; but he bears a message from one wiser than himself. The plain of Bou Farik has belonged to our people since the days when the Arabs possessed Spain. The Emir says: Keep your post for this winter, but if you do not leave it in the spring, he will come with horsemen in number like pebbles in the desert, and will not leave one Frank alive to tell the story of his vengeance."

Colonel Bugeaud stared, smiled, and then frowned when he heard this message.

"Is Abd-el-Kader a child that he boasts so loudly of what he will do? Tell him that I have kept Bou Farik so long that I intend to keep it a little longer. He cannot frighten me away with words, when he has failed to do it with bullets and steel."

Yusuf listened calmly and then replied:

"It is well. The Emir expected such an answer, for he knows that you underrate his power. Hear what he offers you: Send one of your officers with me to see our power, and let him come back and tell you what he has seen."



If you then refuse to go let your blood be on your own heads."

Colonel Bugeaud hesitated. He saw the advantage offered him by such an embassy; but he feared an Arab plot to entrap a hostage out of the French.

"What you say is fair," he answered; "but are you not afraid to let us know how strong you are?"

Yusuf ben Saadi smiled proudly.

"The lion shows himself to his enemies and fears none of them. When they see his mane and hear his voice it is enough. He does not love a battle. He asks only to devour the prey in peace. We ask for our harvests, and we would sooner have them peacefully than let another year go by in a strife. Next year you will have no harvest, nor shall we, unless we make peace. Let the past go into eternity. We want next year to ourselves; and we mean to have it. Will you send the ambassador, to see for himself that we do not boast vainly?"

"No," answered the colonel, bluffly. "I will not order out any man on such a service of danger. You might kill him."

Yusuf looked displeased.

"I, myself, will answer for his head. Does the chief think we are dogs to break a truce?"

Here Colonel Bugeaud, glancing round the room, met the eyes of Corporal Jean Cannon, who had come in with the guard, and now stood shifting from foot to foot, with an eager, nervous expression on his face, as if he longed to speak but dare not.

The colonel was struck by the look, but he said to Yusuf ben Saadi:

"This is an important matter, and I must have time to think over it. Will you permit me to offer you some refreshment while I consult with my advisers?"

Yusuf bowed gravely.

"The counsels of the old are good. I will retire, that the Frank may talk with his wise men."

He rose and made his obeisance, retiring with Captain Jabot, who treated him to some French confectionery and a glass of champagne, both of which he pronounced "tabib" or "good," making no scruple about the wine on account of its whiteness, the Koran prohibiting the "wine that is red," the only kind found in the south.

Colonel Bugeaud sent for his fellow colonel, Legal, and consulted with him as to the policy of sending an officer to Abd-el-Kader's camp; but both agreed that, while such a man might render important service to France as a spy, the probability of his murder was too strong to justify them in ordering any one on such a duty.

"If we could find a volunteer"—suggested Legal doubtfully. "But who would go?"

"He must understand Arabic," said Bugeaud; "and there are not five officers in camp who know anything about it."

"We might send an interpreter."

"None of them would go. They are all Arabs or Jews, and their old friends would call them traitors and kill them for revenge."

"While they were discussing the matter, they heard a gentle cough and a tap on the canvas of the tent, and Corporal Cannon asked:

"Can I see the colonel a moment?"

Colonel Legal looked amazed. Such presumption was unheard of in the Forty-fifth; but Father Bugeaud smiled and said:

"Come in, Corporal Cannon. Aha! I see you have had one duel too many—the thirty-ninth, I believe. That is quite a handsome cut on the forehead you have."

Jean Cannon looked down and fidgeted with his cap, as Bugeaud continued:

"Well, what is it? I saw your eyes when the Arab was in here. What do you want?"

"Leave me to go to the camp of Abd-el-Kader, my colonel," was the firm reply.

"You! Why, what in the name of fortune do you want there? Do you talk Arabic?"

"A little, my colonel. I can say 'good-day' and 'good-by,' and ask, 'what is this?' and 'what do you call that?' Is that enough?"

"Hardly, for our purposes. But that is not the question now. What makes you so tired of your life that you want to throw it away in such a fashion?"

Jean Cannon looked very sheepish.

"Please, my colonel, I am—in love—and my—the girl I love—is in the camp of Abd-el-Kader."

Father Bugeaud looked amazed.

"You! In love! You, who have never been known to look at a girl, who have the name among your comrades of being a sulky fellow only fit to drink. In love and with an Arab girl at that!"

"She is not an Arab girl, my colonel; she is full French on both sides."

Both colonels looked interested.

"Aha! what is this?" asked Legal.

"Tell us your meaning," said Bugeaud.

"Simple enough, my colonels both. When I was ten years old, my father and mother took me to Corsica, with my sister, little Fifine, in the brig Creole, Captain Bart. The Algerine pirates killed all our people but my mother and Fifine, whom they took to Algiers."

"But you! How did you—?"

"Escape? Simple enough, messieurs. My father lashed me to a hen-coop and threw me overboard, and I was picked up by a French vessel next day."

"Well, but you said that—"

"That the girl I loved was in Abd-el-Kader's camp. I am coming to that. Do you not remember the time the Emir came to our country as an ambassador?"

"Certainly. He had a troop of dancers, but I did not call it dancing at all," said the infantry colonel briskly. "It was shuffling."

"Very true, my colonel. Well, I was put on duty in the theater at Toulon as corporal of the guard, the night they came there, and in the principal dancer I recognized my lost sister, Fifine, that I had not seen for ten years."

"Your sister? But you said—"

"The girl I loved. You shall hear, my colonel. I was so mad at the sight of my lost Fifine that I leaped on the stage the moment I saw her, and called her by her name. I was put under arrest; but not before she called back to me. 'Oh Jean! oh! my mother!' The next morning I had a letter from her, in which I learned of the death of my supposed parents, and also that Fifine was not my sister; while, alas, she was the slave of the Arab ambassador and torn from me forever as I thought. Can you wonder, my colonel, that my cruel fate made me mad and desperate, and that, when a foolish coward taunted me and called me 'Corporal Fifine,' I entered on that series of duels of which I am now so much ashamed? But now, colonel, I see a chance, sent me from Heaven, to find Fifine again."

"Let me go with this Arab chief to the very stronghold of the Emir. I have wit and courage. I can learn Arabic, for love will teach me. I shall have a friend in the garrison, and I shall yet escape with Fifine, render a double service to France, and give her, at one time, a recovered daughter and news of importance to you. Only let me go."

The poor corporal had become so earnest in his appeal that his eyes were full of tears, and Colonel Bugeaud observed to Legal:

"He will be of no use if he stays; for I have often observed that men in love are no use as soldiers till they are married. And if he does come out alive, he will do as well as an officer."

Then he turned to Jean Cannon.

"I will let you go, if the chief will take you. He wanted an officer."

Jean Cannon's face lighted up with sly fun.

"If gold lace will not make me an officer, what will, my colonel? He will never know the difference, as long as I have the epaulettes."

"A good idea, corporal. You shall have the uniform of poor Lieutenant Marcot, who was killed yesterday. If you are successful in your mission, you may get the right to wear it in earnest."

Jean Cannon colored up high with pleasure at the hint; for the very same man who had been so desperately hopeless a few hours ago was transformed into the most ambitious of mortals by the sudden access of hope infused into him.

The colonel gave him a note to the adjutant and quartermaster, and a very short time after Yusuf ben Saadi was introduced to a stout, bronzed young officer, in the uniform of a lieutenant of the chasseurs, who was announced to him as the officer chosen to accompany him to Abd-el-Kader's fortress.

It was noticed by all present at the time, as these two stood side by side, that there was a remarkable similarity of face and figure between them. Both were stoutly built, the chasseur much the heavier, but there was a nervous, wiry strength about the Arab that made him look as dangerous as the other. Both had blue eyes and very light hair and beards, nearly white.

"One might swear they were brothers, if one did not know one to be a Frenchman, the other an Arab," quoth Colonel Legal.

"Say rather a Berber," answered Bugeaud.

"I have heard that blue eyes are quite a common thing among the Berbers. As for Cannon, he must come from Normandy, from his white head."

The Arab chief bowed gravely to Cannon, whom he scrutinized closely, and then said something to the interpreter.

"Yusuf ben Saadi says that this man is not an officer. He knows him from the cut across his forehead, which he gave him only a week since with his own *goumia*."

When the interpreter had translated, Colonel Bugeaud answered tranquilly:

"He has just been promoted for bravery, having killed or wounded thirty-eight men."

Yusuf ben Saadi started.

"Thirty-eight men! He must be a great fighter. Let him come along. He shall be welcome, for Abd-el-Kader loves brave men."

His chivalrous nature seemed to be taken captive by the news of the thirty-eight duels, and he and Jean Cannon were soon engaged in conversation through the medium of the interpreter.

"How comes it, if you have fought so many men, that you let me overcome you the other day?" asked Yusuf curiously.

"You did not overcome me," answered Jean in the coolest manner. "I was only playing with you, and, had we been alone, I should have taken off your head in another minute."

"Perhaps. We may try that another day."

"Whenever you wish."

"That is, after I have sent you back to your camp in safety."

"Exactly. I would not dream of fighting till I had accomplished my task."

"You need not. When will you be ready?"

"I am ready."

"Then let us go to our horses. I have one for you, from the Emir."

"It is needless. My own is as good as any in all your stables."

They went outside, and, mounting their horses rode off across the bloody plain of Bou Farik, without any farewells to those behind.

The Arab was very silent and haughty as he rode along, and inasmuch as Jean did not understand more than a few words of Arabic, they did not seem as if they were likely to become intimate.

Yusuf, when they had got about half a mile from the camp, turned to the chasseur and made him a sign that they were about to go faster.

"With all my heart," responded Cannon, and they shook their bridles and galloped away over the hay-stubble, passing several black patches that showed where the Arabs had fired the cut hay.

As they passed these Yusuf ben Saadi looked sullen and angry, as if he regretted the destruction; but he said nothing till they had ridden for several hours at a rapid pace, when he pulled up to a walk and spoke to one of his followers in Arabic.

Then this man, a short swarthy fellow who looked the Moor all over, suddenly broke out to Jean Cannon in French, with a strong Marseilles accent:

"Well, lieutenant or corporal, whichever you be, are you tired with your ride yet?"

Jean Cannon stared at him angrily:

"Who the deuce are you?" he asked. "There is only one class of Arabs that talk French and those are—"

"Renegades, my faith," answered the other coolly.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE JOURNEY.

JEAN CANNON looked at the renegade with a strong feeling of distrust and dislike. He had been brought up an enthusiastic Frenchman, and the idea of any man willingly renouncing such a grand nationality to become what Jean, in his heart, called a "miserable Pagan," struck him as indicating a base nature worthy of contempt.

"A renegade, are you?" he responded stiffly. "Then I suppose you listened to all the talk in our camp to report to your masters. A noble occupation for a Frenchman."

The renegade laughed.

"Who told you I was a Frenchman?"

"Your own tongue. There is no hiding the accent of the Marseillais."

"That is true. I am a Marseillais by birth and I care not who knows it, corporal."

He seemed to take a malicious pleasure in calling the other by his real title rather than that indicated by his uniform.

"Yes," he proceeded, "when I was plain Baptiste Bigot, cabin boy of the Creole, I was a Marseillais, kicked and cuffed by captain and cook, and I was so proud of being a Frenchman that I had to live on my pride and the scraps of the brig."

Jean Cannon looked at him with more attention and asked:

"What! were you, too, on board the Creole?"

"Yes," answered the renegade with a shrug.

"If you want the truth, I was there a slave to every one, till the Arabs set me free and made a man of me."

"Set you free?"

"Yes, set me free. You would call it making a slave of me, but for my part I found slavery a better lot than being cabin boy of the Creole. I was not cold, for the climate was warm; I was never hungry as long as my master had enough to eat, and I found when I joined the Arab church that the only difference between that and Christianity is that the Arabs act their religion while you, Christians, only talk about it."

Jean Cannon colored angrily as he retorted: "I have heard Father Marbot say that a renegade Christian is the worst foe to his old religion, because he feels that he deserves the torments of hell for deserting it."

Baptiste Bigot laughed scornfully.

"The torments of hell! Yes, that is the way they keep us in terror, threatening us with something no one can prove. Give me the religion that makes men honest and charitable like the Arabs, not liars and thieves, like you French."

Jean Cannon was so angry that he had difficulty in restraining himself from striking the renegade, but he answered:



"Very well. I see you are a complete Pagan. There is no need of further talk, for I must not quarrel on this mission. I am an ambassador." The renegade laughed again.

"An ambassador! Say a spy, rather. Do you think I did not hear your men say to each other: 'There's Corporal Cannon. He is the fellow to cheat the Arabs.' Suppose I tell the chief who you are? What can prevent his killing you?"

Jean Cannon gathered up his horse for a bolt, as he replied, defiantly:

"My right arm. Do you know who I am?"

"My faith, no. I never heard of you till the men called you by name."

"Then let me tell you, Master Bigot, that my camp name is the 'Man of Thirty-eight Duels,' and that if you and your friends wish to try to assassinate me here, now is your time."

And Jean Cannon wheeled his horse, drew his long sword and shook it defiantly at the Arabs who had been riding quietly by his side, paying no attention to the conversation that was going on in a strange language.

The young chief, Yusuf ben Saadi, seemed to be greatly surprised at the sudden outburst of the Frenchman, and began to talk excitedly in Arabic to Bigot.

What passed the chasseur did not, of course, comprehend; but the chief appeared to be giving the renegade a severe rating, the other to be excusing himself; for at last he came forward and said, sullenly:

"The chief begs you will pardon my loss of temper and continue on with us. He says that his honor is responsible for your safety, and that you may go unarmed through all our camps as securely as if at home in France."

The angry corporal immediately sheathed his saber and shook hands with Yusuf in the most friendly fashion, saying:

"I'll trust you, for you are a brave man; but as for this renegade, let him keep a civil tongue or I'll slice him up."

Yusuf looked curiously at him, and spoke inquiringly to Bigot, who answered him in a sullen, reluctant tone, as if unwilling to translate the remark.

Then the chief and all his Arabs laughed loudly and seemed to be poking fun at the renegade, for Yusuf came up to Jean and pointed inquiringly at Bigot, then made signs as if cutting a throat.

Jean Cannon nodded and the Arabs laughed louder than before, while Yusuf said something in Arabic to Bigot, and watched him closely as he translated to the chasseur.

"The chief says he gives you perfect liberty to kill or beat me whenever you feel that your health requires exercise," said the renegade in a mumbling voice.

Then Jean Cannon, completely pacified, laughed good-humoredly, slapped the other on the back and cried out:

"Very well, take care you don't make me angry again. And now let us go on our journey."

From that time everything passed more pleasantly and Yusuf entered into a long conversation with the Frenchman through the medium of Bigot, expatiating on the beauties of life in the desert, on the great glories of Abd-el-Kader, and on the certainty that, in another year the Arabs would drive the French out of the country.

Jean, on his part, confined himself to asking questions on everything he saw and played his part of admiring audience so well that Bigot at last remarked:

"Ah, you'll be converted as I was at last. There is no life like that of the desert. We shall have you a good Moslem before you are ready to go back to Bou Farik."

This time Jean was on his guard and ready to play his part through, so he answered gayly:

"Who knows? In the mean time where is this palace of the Emir of which you have all been giving such marvelous accounts?"

Bigot pointed to the mountains, which they were now fast approaching.

"When we have crossed those rocks, we shall be in sight of the great desert. The Emir's palace stands at the border by the Lake of Sweet Waters."

"The Lake of Sweet Waters! Do they have lakes in this desert of dry earth?"

"Only that one, but it is fit for the abode of houris. Damascus itself is not to be named in comparison therewith."

"Damascus! Ah where is that?"

Jean Cannon had all a Frenchman's contempt for geography outside of France.

"Damascus is the most beautiful place in the world after Paradise and the Lake of Sweet Waters. But you will see it before to-morrow morning."

They rode on and at last left the plain of Bou Farik and began to ascend the rugged slopes of the Atlas mountains.

As they paused to let their horses breathe, Jean Cannon looked back from a plateau of rock and saw, far away on the plain, a thin brown haze of smoke, hovering over one spot as large as a man's hand.

It was all he could see of the camp of his brigade with its hundreds of men.

Yusuf ben Saadi saw him look and observed to him:

"The works of man are small in the balance with the works of Allah, but we can cover all that plain with horsemen. Judge what chance your people will have when Abd-el-Kader gives the word."

"Then, if he can do so much," Jean very naturally observed, "why does he not do it at once instead of talking about it?"

"Because the men of the tribes are too busy gathering the harvests elsewhere," answered Yusuf. "In the spring they are free to do as they please when they send the camels and sheep to pasture with the women of the tribes. Then let the French beware of our vengeance."

The chasseur made no answer, for he thought that the Arab was making only an empty boast to impose on his credulity.

They rode on over the mountains, the air growing cold and sharp as they came near the limit of perpetual snow, but the active little barb horses carried them gayly along, and shortly after noon they had crossed the ridge, and came in sight of the vast yellow sea of sand which Jean Cannon beheld for the first time—the terrible and mysterious desert of Sahara, toward which they began to descend from that moment.

Below them lay piled a confusion of black basaltic foot-hills, with little ponds hiding away in the hollows like specks of silver. Dwarf pines and birches grew round them as they rode and changed to dense forests further down the mountains, while thin curls of smoke rising from a hundred different quarters announced that the country was pretty fairly inhabited.

"Here," said Bigot to his companion, "begin the dominions of the Kabyle tribes of Bou Ammens and Bou Saadi. They live among the rocks, fight on foot and will laugh at all your cavalry and guns. See how our path is commanded on every side by precipices. Behind every rock, even now, lies a Kabyle with his long gun, and were we a French army we could not advance a mile."

Jean Cannon saw the strength of the place, and said nothing, but thought to himself:

"A few companies of infantry could clear the rocks in short order."

"Below us," continued Bigot, pointing, "at the foot of the mountain you may see several dark patches in the yellow desert. Every one of those is a *douar*."

"A what?"

"A *douar*. The camp of a tribe of Arabs with their flocks, herds and horsemen."

"How many horse to a *douar*?" asked Jean Cannon innocently.

"About five hundred."

This was a gross exaggeration, and the young chasseur knew it; for he had not been a year in Africa for nothing.

He quietly counted the patches that Bigot had pointed out and made nine of them; so that he calculated on a force at the outside of about two thousand Arabs in the tribes confederated under Abd-el-Kader.

"It is a game of boasting, as I thought," he said to himself. "In the spring it will not be we who are driven out."

Yusuf ben Saadi watched his face as he scanned the landscape, and said something in Arabic to Bigot, who observed:

"The chief wishes to remark that these are only the *douars* of one-tenth of our horsemen, and that all the Kabyles of mountains promise to help us in the spring. Besides this there are the soldiers of the Emir whom you have not seen, with their guns."

Jean Cannon shrugged his shoulders. He did not believe a word of it.

Yusuf said nothing, but looked vexed as he rode on down the mountain, where they began to meet men in striped cloaks, with long guns on their shoulders.

These men saluted them with grave courtesy and vanished into the now thickening woods of oak and beech, fast turning into walnut, almond and chestnut trees as they kept on toward the lower ground.

At last they arrived in a dark valley with the mountains on one side and a singular square block of granite on the other several hundred feet high, as if it had been thrown into their path hundreds of years before by some giant's hand.

Several little mountain streams, arrested by this obstacle had united into one and skirted its base in quite a deep black rivulet about fifty feet broad.

Here the Arabs came to a walk, and Bigot said to the chasseur:

"When we pass this rock, which we call the Stone of Solomon, we shall see the palace of the Emir Abd-el-Kader. This stone was placed here by the great King Solomon's orders, by the giant fallen angels to hide the Paradise of Sweet Waters from the outside world. None but a good Moslem is allowed to know the way in. You must now submit to be blindfolded, or else you can turn back and go home."

Jean Cannon hesitated a moment. As far as his mission from Colonel Bugeaud was concerned, it was substantially over, for he had learned all he cared to know.

But such a mission would never have lured Jean Cannon away from his comrades but for a more powerful motive.

"Behind that rock," he thought, "Fifine is languishing in captivity and I may be able to see her, perhaps to rescue her. Who can tell? By this time perhaps she has married the Emir and become one of his wives. I am possibly a fool to go after her. But I cannot help it. I love her and while there is the least chance of saving her it is my duty to try it."

He turned calmly to Bigot:

"I am ready to be blinded. I suppose you will let me see when I enter the palace?"

"Once we have passed the entrance, you can inspect everything, my brave Frenchman, and I fancy it will make you open your eyes. As yet, you have seen nothing of what Arabs can do if they like."

Yusuf ben Saadi said something to his men who gathered round Jean Cannon and bound his arms behind him.

"That is to keep you from being tempted to pull off the bandage," replied Bigot.

Then they took away his weapons.

"That is for fear you may be tempted to commit violence on the way," was the consoling dictum of Bigot.

Finally they tied his feet together under his horse's belly and cast the hood of a bornous over his head nearly stifling him and completely depriving him of sight.

The chasseur submitted quietly to all this and then heard his guardians give a great shout and begin to fire off pistols and guns round his head, the bullets screaming past him in uncomfortable proximity.

Then came a regular volley close by, with the shouts of hundreds of men, and he felt his horse gallop wildly away up and down hill, twisting and turning in every direction, while the firing continued.

How long this lasted he could not compute, but at last he found that he was galloping over a level road, and felt that some one had hold of his bridle-reins from the regular motion of the horse.

Then he heard a loud shout in front and the rattle of a tremendous volley, the balls from which went screaming over his head, and in the midst of it his horse was thrown on its haunches while some one plucked the bornous off his head leaving him in the full glare of sunlight, surrounded by hundreds of Arabs, all dressed in a sort of scarlet uniform, who were galloping round him like madmen executing the fantasia of welcome of which he had heard but which he had never seen before.

He gazed round him dazzled by the glare and found himself in the most lovely scene he had ever beheld, by the borders of a little lake, with palms and all sorts of tropical trees growing in profusion around it.

And in the midst of the garden, like a dream of Fairyland rose a grand white palace of fanciful Saracenic architecture, such as Jean Cannon had never imagined possible in any country, much less Algeria.

"How do you like our home now?" said a voice beside him, and Jean Cannon beheld the renegade and Yusuf watching him closely.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE EMIR'S PALACE.

FOR the first time since he left Bou Farik, Corporal Cannon felt amazed and a trifle disconcerted, for he felt that he had greatly underrated the power of the Arab Emir.

Any man who was master of such a palace as this must be a man of education and intelligence, with followers possessed of skill in the arts.

Before he could collect his scattered wits to analyze the scene, he heard the loud reports of artillery in regular salvos, and realized that the Arab Emir had more cannons than the French had given him credit for possessing.

The horsemen round him, moreover, as near as he could see, were armed with guns of European make, and their crimson dresses had a civilized appearance.

As he looked, the renegade loosed his bonds and released his feet from the cords that had bound them; while he said in a low voice:

"The Emir himself is coming to meet you. Show him respect, for he is the greatest man in these parts."

"I shall treat him as an ambassador is entitled to treat him," responded the chasseur firmly; "that is, with the same respect I accord to my colonel."

"That is not enough," answered Bigot. "You must do as the rest do, dismount and lay your face to the dust."

As he spoke, the cannonade died away, to be replaced by the strains of trumpets and cymbals, while the Arab soldiers drew off to each side and opened to view a slowly advancing procession, headed by a man in white robes, mounted on a white horse, presenting a shadowy, ghostlike appearance in the midst of the blaze of color that surrounded him.

The moment he made his appearance all the Arab cavaliers jumped off their horses, including the young chief, Yusuf ben Saadi, and pro-



trated themselves on the grass, while the white horseman rode forward at a foot pace.

Pretty soon therefore, Jean Cannon found himself the only mounted man in a vast silent assembly, and, remembering his pledge to show the Emir the same respect as his own colonel, he got off his horse and stood before the animal, with his hand up at the regular military salute.

The white horseman came on, followed by a procession of grave white-bearded men on foot, wearing huge green turbans and long brown robes, till he came in front of Jean Cannon whom he inspected closely.

Jean saw before him a dark handsome man of near forty, with an eye like that of an eagle and a keen intellectual face.

The countenance was the same that he had seen, a year before, in the box of the theater at Toulon; and he felt a thrill of hatred pass through him as he thought:

"That is Abd-el-Kader, who has stolen my Fifiue from me."

The great Emir looked at him with the grave imperturbable pride that formed his habitual expression, and then made the chasseur an imperious sign to kneel as the rest had done.

Jean Cannon stood immovable at the same salute, and Abd-el-Kader frowned at him and repeated the sign.

"Down, fool," hissed Bigot, in a fierce half-whisper. "Do you want to lose your head?"

Jean Cannon looked the Emir in the eye and called out in French:

"Acknowledge my salute if you be an officer. I am tired of holding my hand up."

To his surprise Abd-el-Kader smiled and made an acknowledgment, as correctly as Colonel Bugeaud could have done.

"Oho!" thought Jean, "so the chief learned a little French with us. That is something to know. But he did not make me kneel."

Abd-el-Kader pronounced some Arabic words in a loud voice, extending his hands as if in blessing, and the multitude slowly rose up and stood before him.

Then he beckoned to Jean Cannon and said to him in broken French:

"You. Whence you come? Who?"

"I am Lieutenant Jean Cannon, very much at your highness's service," replied the young chasseur boldly. "I was told you wished to see one of us. Well, here I am!"

Abd-el-Kader seemed a little puzzled at the rapid French, and beckoned to Bigot, who came forward in a cringing, abject manner and did his duty as an interpreter.

The Emir smiled approvingly and replied, through the renegade:

"The French officer is very welcome. He can see the power of Abd-el-Kader, and tell his countrymen how useless it is to strive against the men of the desert. Let him attend my adopted son, Yusuf ben Saadi, who will show him everything, and in the morning I will give him audience."

He waved his hand and turned away, when Yusuf ben Saadi came forward and touched the chasseur on the arm.

"Come," said Bigot, "we will take you to your apartments in the palace. You are to be treated like a prince, which will be quite a change from the corporal's mess—eh, my friend? You are in luck."

Jean Cannon felt disgusted at the man's tone of familiarity, but he forbore to show it, for now he was acting a part.

Moreover, the thought that he was every minute coming nearer Fifiue made his heart beat, and caused him to bear everything patiently.

The young chief, for whom he had begun to conceive a strange liking, led him to the palace and ushered him into a magnificent suite of apartments, the like of which he had never so much as dreamed of beholding.

Inlaid marble floors; Persian rugs, cushions of silk and brocade; silver lamps, swung from the ceiling; balconies of carved woods, with curious lattices, looking out on the garden; all formed a picture of luxury that dazzled the chasseur, used to the bare floor of the barrack room.

He was closely attended by Yusuf, who called some black slaves; and Jean Cannon found himself waited on like a prince, with silver basins to wash in, an exquisite repast, served on banded knees, and so much of beauty and luxury that, when they gave him his chibouque at last, he said with a sigh of content:

"That is beautiful. What a pity I must leave it all so soon! It is like the old stories of the Arabian nights."

Bigot said a few Arabic words to Yusuf, and then observed blandly:

"There is no need to leave it so soon. You can stay here forever if you like."

Jean looked round him longingly.

"I should like to; but no. After all, it is not France. Still, I should like to try it for a month, I confess."

"That is equally easy," answered the renegade in the same bland tones. "His highness is happy to have you for a guest. Besides, we are told that you are a great fighter. You can

stay here as long as you like, if you will teach our men to fight, French fashion."

Jean Cannon winked slyly at him.

"You are a deep one, my chicken; but not deep enough for a man from Tarascon. So you want me to teach these Arabs to fight like Frenchmen, do you?"

"Why not? It will make your fortune for life. The Emir would make you a colonel at once, and give you a palace and a pretty Arab wife."

Jean Cannon started. He saw the drift of all this politeness. Abd-el-Kader wanted to bribe him into entering his service.

"I don't want an Arab wife," he said in a doubtful way, as if hesitating. "I don't talk Arabic. My wife could lay plots to make a fool of me under my nose, and I none the wiser."

Bigot laughed.

"You could soon learn. I did so in a year, and now every one takes me for an Arab."

"That may be. I don't want to be taken for an Arab. France is good enough for me, my friend. Now, if the Emir could give me a French wife—some captive for example—we might talk business together, Monsieur Bigot."

The renegade seemed to be struck by the remark, and held a rapid conversation in Arabic with Yusuf, after which the latter suddenly retired and Bigot said:

"We might arrange that matter, if you were content with such a wife."

"But I must see her first," pursued the chasseur slowly. "I am told you Arabs never see your wives till you are married; and you might put me off on some old hag without a tooth in her head."

Bigot laughed heartily.

"You are sharp, corporal. No, we will not treat you so meanly. It all depends on the will of the Emir. He may not feel disposed to grant such a favor. Yusuf ben Saadi has gone to see him about it."

"Ah, by-the-by, Monsieur Bigot, who is this Yusuf ben Saadi?" asked the chasseur curiously. "He behaves like an Arab, yet there is something in his appearance so different from the rest that—is he, too, a renegade like you?"

"My faith, no, as far as I can tell. He was an Arab child in the tent of the Emir when I was sold to Abd-el-Kader, and the girls even then called him the Emir's son."

"But he is not his son. They have not a feature in common. In fact, I heard our men say that he was like enough to me to be my brother."

Bigot looked at him sharply.

"There is a likeness," he admitted, "but that is nothing uncommon. Yusuf ben Saadi has one thing that distinguishes him from all men, not marked on purpose."

"And what is that?"

"The Arabs say that he has, on his right temple, marked by the hand of God from his birth, a blue, zigzag streak, like a thunderbolt, exactly the same as all the tribe of Bou Farik have tattooed there, when they are made Moslems at fourteen."

Jean Cannon listened intently and asked:

"Do you mean that? Are you sure that it was not tattooed there also?"

"So I have heard the old mollah say. The mark is different from a tattoo, lighter in color. See, I have the tattoo on my own temple."

He put aside his head-gear to show the mark and went on:

"They marked me thus when I was taken into the tribe. They say that any man who has such a mark by nature is held sacred in the tribe of Bou Farik. It may be that Yusuf is a foundling, who was taken into the tribe on that account, but no one can tell that save the Emir, who calls him his son."

Jean Cannon seemed to be much struck by this apparently trivial piece of information, and fell into a brown study, from which all the efforts of Bigot could not rouse him till the entrance of Yusuf, who seemed to be much excited and pleased about something.

"The Emir has consented," observed Bigot. "You are to have a wife from among his slaves. Let us hear what he says."

The young chief advanced to Jean Cannon and saluted him with great cordiality, making him a long address in Arabic, which the renegade translated thus:

"Yusuf ben Saadi hopes that the Frank will become his brother, forever, for the Emir has consented to let the stranger have a wife from among his Christian slaves, whichever shall please him most. If he would become a Moslem, Abd-el-Kader would give him his own daughter to wife, but, so long as he will enter his service and teach the Arabs the French way of fighting, he is content to let the Frank retain his religion and marry a Christian wife."

Jean Cannon could hardly believe his luck while this speech was being translated.

"I shall see Fifiue," he murmured. "I shall save her, and we shall find means to escape."

To Yusuf he said:

"Very well. If the Emir has the wife I want, I will enter his service for this winter, on condition that he lets me go back to my regiment

in the spring, when I will tell them they had better leave the country quietly before the Emir forces them out of it."

Yusuf seemed delighted and immediately caught hold of Jean Cannon, whom he embraced heartily, showering Arabic blessings on his head, while Bigot observed:

"The Emir has given orders to have his Christian slaves paraded for your inspection; and as a special favor, you are allowed to enter the harem, with the chief eunuch and Yusuf ben Saadi."

Jean Cannon got up feeling very much as if he were drunk or dreaming and slowly followed Yusuf down a number of long corridors, till they came to a heavy door in a bare wall, at which the Arab gave a knock, when it was opened by a tall, gaunt negro, who carried a drawn cimeter.

The black frowned till Yusuf held up a ring, at sight of which he bowed and gave way, though with a dissatisfied expression of countenance.

A moment later the chasseur found himself for the first time in his life, in a place of which he had often dreamed—an Arab harem.

The luxury of this portion of the palace was indescribable. Abd-el-Kader seemed to be determined, if he must imprison his women, that they should have a splendid cage.

Silver and gold, velvet rugs, brilliantly illuminated walls, marble pavements, satin cushions, fountains of rose-water, clouds of incense, figures of slaves in gorgeous dresses flitting to and fro; such was the scene that saluted the eyes of Jean Cannon.

He saw lovely girls of all shades of color, from the milk and roses of the Circassian to the dusky satin skin of the maid from Abyssinia; every variety of costume, from the rich silk mufflers of the Turkish head wife to the simple girdle of cowrie shells of her black slave.

And all of them were unveiled and staring at him with a mirthful curiosity that made him feel exceedingly bashful; for they seemed to think him a strange animal.

Yusuf ben Saadi led him forward through a suit of lofty halls, each more splendid than the other, till they came to a terrace looking out over a steep precipice, at the foot of which was visible the brown desert, all sprinkled with douars.

On this terrace stood a row of girls, all in mean dresses, and looking thin and downcast, to which Yusuf pointed, saying:

"Giaourin."

Jean Cannon had learned enough Arabic to understand this word.

"Christian women."

He advanced eagerly and looked at the poor girls, his heart swelling with pity; but all the while looking for Fifiue.

She was not among them.

Instead of that, he was saluted in a Babel of tongues, not one of which could be comprehended and realized that while these girls might be Christians, not one was French.

"Ah, mademoiselles," he cried instinctively, "pardon a thousand times. I would I could marry you all to save you from Paganism; but that is impossible. Who knows a French girl called Fifiue Cannon? It is she I seek."

The girls shrunk back in dismay; but one of them called out in bad French:

"Fifiue is a renegade. She is to marry the very man beside you."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### ABOU GOURM.

POOR Jean Cannon! When he heard that he staggered as if some one had struck him a heavy blow.

"Fifiue a renegade!" he faltered. "Who says it?"

"Me—Katrin Scheller," cried the voice, and a little flaxen-haired, German-looking girl came forward, speaking with the Alsatian accent of the Rhenish provinces. "Fifiue is to be married to the Emir's son, after the fast of the Ramadan."

Jean Cannon looked at Yusuf ben Saadi; but it was plain that the young Arab did not take in the sense of what was going on.

Then he turned to Katrin Scheller. He noticed that neither she nor any of the other girls was at all attractive in face figure or dress. They had a forlorn, dejected look as if they were badly treated.

"Look here, mademoiselle," he said, "how is it that you all come here and who are you all?"

"My faith, we all came the same way," she answered drearily. "Some are Spanish, some Italian; I am the only one from France. Eh, but they make us work all the time and give us no peace. There is not much pleasure in a harem for us, and they don't try to convert us either. The Moslem women prefer to have us do the washing and hard work."

The other girls had gathered round them, staring at the chasseur and trying to make out what was going on, while Yusuf ben Saadi stood apart with his arms folded, a look of cold disdain on his handsome face, as if he regarded them beneath his notice. Jean Cannon listened to the querulous talk of the Alsatian slave, but



his heart was too much occupied to pay much heed till he had ascertained his object."

"And this Fifiine Cannon," he asked gently. "Was she one of you and how came she to apostatize?"

Katrin laughed bitterly.

"She one of us! Oh, no; she was always too proud of her pretty face for that; and when the mother of the dancers took her to train, she was prouder than ever. She knew what she was about. It was not for nothing she was so sweet to the Emir, whenever he entered the harem, quarreling with the pipe girl, and pretending to be eager to serve him. She is one of those sly girls that will always deceive the men. I wouldn't like to be her husband though, I can tell you."

It was evident that the harem drudge was bitterly envious of what she thought to be the good fortune of Fifiine, and Jean, who felt some share of the anger himself, asked:

"And why would you not like to be her husband if you were a man, mademoiselle?"

"My faith, I know," returned Katrin, tossing her head with a sneer. "It is not for nothing she keeps making signals and passing notes to Abou Goum, the renegade. Her husband had best look to himself."

"And who is Abou Goum?" asked Jean.

Here he happened to glance at Yusuf, and noticed that the Arab seemed, for the first time to be paying attention, attracted by the sound of an Arabic name.

Katrin was only too eager to talk.

"He is the interpreter. You must have seen him. His French name is Bigot, and he and Fifiine understand each other too well, in my opinion."

Here Yusuf ben Saadi said something in Arabic to the girl, who colored and seemed to be confused, as she answered rapidly.

"What did he say to you?" asked Jean.

"He asked me what we were saying about the interpreter, and I told him a lie. It is easy to deceive these Arabs."

Jean, now rather disgusted at the petty spites and jealousies he witnessed, turned to Yusuf and said:

"Let us go."

The Arab looked a little surprised, but made no objection; for he understood the gesture, if not the words of the chasseur, and they slowly left the presence of the Christian girls, who looked deserted, but did not dare to follow them.

Only Katrin called out:

"Won't you come again, monsieur? They said you had come to set us all free."

"I will do my best," answered Jean; and then they left the harem without any further adventure.

But, look round as the chasseur might, among all the faces in that harem he saw no sign of the one for which he was looking.

Fifiine seemed to have vanished.

They came out and returned to Jean's suite of apartments, where they found Bigot waiting, and where Yusuf ben Saadi asked:

"Has the Frank made his selection of a wife, and is he willing to enter the service of the great Emir, Abd-el-Kader?"

The chasseur listened to the question as it came through the lips of Bigot, and replied:

"Tell the chief I have not made up my mind, but I will let him know to-morrow. And then, Monsieur Bigot, I want to have a little talk with you."

Yusuf ben Saadi bowed with grave courtesy when he heard the message, and replied:

"I will attend the Frank envoy in the morning, and the Emir will grant him audience. In the mean time the palace and all within it are his. Tell him that, and ask him if he wishes for anything?"

"I wish for an attendant who talks my own tongue," said Jean.

"You can take Abou Goum; he is at your orders. Peace be with you."

And Yusuf ben Saadi departed.

As soon as he was gone, Corporal Cannon turned on the renegade and asked him:

"Are you French or Arab at heart. Come, we are alone, with none to hear us now. Which is it?"

Bigot looked surprised.

"What makes you ask the question? I have told you already. In France I am no one; here I am Abou Goum, with my horse and arms, the favor of Abd-el-Kader, and the chance to marry into the family of a chief. I should be a fool to remain French."

"Then why," asked the chasseur slowly, "are you in correspondence with a French girl, and trying to deceive the Emir's son, who is to marry her?"

Bigot or Abou Goum turned deadly pale.

"How do you know?—It is not true—I—in short—it is not true."

"It is true. Your face shows it. Now, my friend, how far has this thing gone? Tell me, or it will be the worse for you."

"I swear I am innocent. I do not in the least understand you," protested Abou Goum. "I have never—"

"Never passed a note to a dancing-girl in the harem!" asked Cannon quietly.

He was watching the renegade keenly and saw that some mystery was hidden behind his confusion and protestations.

"Dancing girl! Oh, yes, that is—"

He seemed to be paralyzed at the knowledge possessed by the soldier; but pursued:

"That was a mere nothing. She is a girl from France, and had a wild notion that it was possible to get the French Government to ransom her."

Jean Cannon smiled bitterly.

"A wild notion indeed! But how came she to write to you, and how many notes have passed between you, Bigot?"

The renegade looked round fearfully.

"Not so loud. There are others who understand a little French, though they pretend not. I will tell you the honest truth, monsieur; but do not betray me, or my head would not be worth a single hour's purchase."

"I never betray a Frenchman," answered the chasseur, quietly. "On the contrary, I would do all I could to help one out of the power of these Pagans."

Bigot looked round again and whispered:

"Monsieur corporal, we are watched. The Emir has spies everywhere. I have had to talk to you as I have because I knew that others were listening who would report my words. But in truth, monsieur, I would I were back in France. Ah, *mon Dieu*, you do not know what it is to be a renegade."

Jean Cannon watched his face while he was whispering, and then said sternly:

"Go on with your story; but if you try to deceive me, you might better be dead. This girl—how much do you know of her?"

The renegade drew closer.

"It happened this way, monsieur," he said, in a low tone. "To make my living I have to do all sorts of things here, and, among others, I play the doctor. It is easy enough, for you have only to write charms and give them to the fools, who believe they are cured by them. About three months ago I was sent for to the harem, to prescribe for a sick girl. She was closely veiled, but I was allowed to feel her pulse, and I found there was nothing the matter with her. She was only shamming."

"Did you tell her so?"

"Not I, monsieur. We doctors would starve if we told the truth. I told them—the people round—that she had a complication of diseases and required great care. I knew there was something behind this sham, probably a lover; and, sure enough, as I felt her pulse a second time, with my back to the rest, she slipped a note into my hand."

"Have you that note?" asked Jean sharply.

"Yes."

"Give it me this instant."

The renegade looked at him amazed.

"You! Why, what have you to do with—"

"Never mind. Give me the note. It was written in French, was it not?"

"Yes, but how did you know?"

"I know everything, and I know that if you do not give it to me I shall tell Yusuf."

Abou Goum seemed paralyzed with fear.

"For heaven's sake, no! He is going to marry her, and he would slice off my head like a blade of grass under a sickle."

"So much the more reason I should see the note. Give it me, quick."

"Here it is, monsieur. On my honor there is nothing in it."

Jean Cannon clutched the dirty piece of paper and glanced at it eagerly.

It contained these words:

"You are a Frenchman. If you remember your mother, help to save me from a fate worse than death. Meet me at the Lion's Rock at midnight."

"FIFIINE CANNON."

"Where is the Lion's Rock?" asked the chasseur.

Abou Goum shuddered.

"It lies at the edge of the desert, and there is not a man in the tribe would dare go there after dark."

"Why not?"

"Why not! *Eh, parbleu*, because it is well named. It is the place where the old Sultan takes his walk at nights, and if a man meet him, it is good-by man."

"The old Sultan? Who is he?"

"It is the name the Arabs give the Lion. You will hear him to-night. He takes toll of every camp in turn."

"And this girl asked you to meet her there. Did you go?"

"Do you think I am a fool? No. But I have since thought she must have been very desperate to name such a place to meet a man like me."

"And how long ago was it that you received this note?"

"About three months."

"Did you answer it?"

"Yes, monsieur, on my next visit. That is, I did not answer it, but I received another."

"Where is it?"

"Here, monsieur."

Jean read these words:

"You did not come to the Lion's Rock. You are no true Frenchman. The crisis has passed and I accept my fate. As for you, God will punish you."

"And is that all that passed?"

"All, monsieur, on my word. I do not even know who the girl is. I never saw her face and you may be sure I never went to the Lion's Rock."

Jean Cannon eyed him with some scorn.

"I do not doubt it. Show me from the garden, if you can, where is this Lion's Rock of which you speak."

"But you will promise to tell no one?" urged the renegade, who did not like the chasseur's cold, haughty manner.

"Not unless you force me by treachery. See here, Bigot, we are countrymen; and if we stick together we can do a great deal. Keep your own counsel, and in the mean time let me see this Lion's Rock."

He suspected Bigot to be a traitor, and had resolved not to trust him in any manner; but he was also determined to use the renegade as far as he could to further his plans.

He suspected that Fifiine had been put under severe pressure to induce her to embrace the faith of Islam, and that it had been in a moment of desperation she had appealed to the renegade to help her to escape.

Where was she now? Did any one suspect his own relations to her?

Thus ruminating, he followed Abou Goum through the garden, to where it terminated at the edge of the precipice, under the wall of the harem inclosure.

Here Abou Goum showed him the steep bank of rocks that stretched down to the sands of the desert, and pointed out a little pool of water, far below, which sparkled like a gem in the sun, shaded by three date palms.

By the side of the spring was a shelf of rock, that rose obliquely from the desert, and formed a little natural couch, just above the pool, about thirty feet away.

"That is the Lion's Rock. The Sultan takes his post there, to watch for the gazelles and wild asses, as they come to drink. A nice place for a man to meet a girl!"

"They would be pretty safe against intruders, if what you say be true," observed Jean Cannon musingly. "Does any one ever come on this side of the garden?"

"Heaven forbid!" said the renegade fervently. "Why, do you know the Sultan often comes up here at nights; and, but for the high wall of the harem garden, it would not be safe for the ladies."

"But there is no wall to protect the rest of the garden," observed the chasseur.

"There needs none. The Sultan is no fool, and he knows there are a hundred men on guard with loaded muskets. They turn out fast enough when they hear him."

Jean Cannon said nothing as they went back; but he kept a close watch on the windows of the harem as he passed, and saw a sudden wave of a white handkerchief instantly withdrawn.

The wave of that handkerchief told him that he was recognized, and his heart began to beat more tumultuously than ever.

"It is Fifiine," he thought. "She knows I am here. She has friends somewhere. How shall I let her know that I will be at the Lion's Rock to-night?"

He sauntered on with apparent unconcern for a few steps, following the renegade; and then suddenly halted and cried out:

"Come back. I want to look at the Lion's Rock again. I have a fancy that way."

A little surprised at the preference, the renegade followed him back, and they stood at the top of the precipice looking down.

"It seems to me," observed Jean, "that an active man might go down this bank as easily as the goats do. See, there are more than fifty of them cropping the grass."

"Yes. I fancy that is what brings the Sultan up here at nights," said Abou Goum in an uneasy way. "You will please observe, Monsieur Corporal, that it is now very near sunset, and that the goats are feeding up hill. It is time we were off, for the Sultan goes on a walk as soon as it is good and dark."

In truth, even while he spoke, they heard a low distant mutter, as of far off thunder, and the goats began to bound up the hill, as if they had taken a little fright.

Abou Goum pulled Jean's arm nervously.

"That is the Sultan now. Come away. There is no telling when or where he will come. He must be hungry when he begins to roar so early in the evening."

But Jean Cannon remained looking down the precipice, and muttering:

"With a good moon, one might easily go down. And no one would dare follow."

He lingered there till the sun had set, in spite of the renegade's entreaties, and at last Abou Goum cried out:

"For heaven's sake let us go, or the lion will be here after us."

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE LION'S ROCK.

ABOU GOUm was so much frightened at the bare idea of the lion coming after him in the shadows of night, that he finally set off at a run, leaving Jean Cannon still standing at the



edge of the precipice, looking down into the desert.

Not that the chasseur felt entirely at ease. On the contrary, there was something in the vast solitude of the desert below him, only made more perfect by the isolation of the few Bedouin camps, scattered by the foot of the mountains, that awed him.

Then, too, the distant muttering sound had become more plain at intervals, and he began to realize that he was hearing, for the first time the roar of a wild lion.

Then what kept Jean Cannon alone and unarmed? He had been deprived even of his saber, yet remained standing at the edge of that wall of rock, looking down.

Simply, this was what kept him.

Behind him, not ten feet off, was another wall, twenty feet high; and, behind this wall, as he knew, was the girl he adored.

And in this wall, a little way to the right, he saw a small low door, about tall enough for the passage of a dog or sheep.

Yet it was from this door, not a moment later, that he heard his own name called, and out crept, on hands and knees, the figure of a girl, who ran to him and hung on his neck, sobbing:

"Jean, Jean, you have come at last before it is too late to say farewell."

"Ay, before it is too late," he answered tenderly. "How glad I am to hear you say that, Fifine. And you have not forgotten me in all these years?"

"How could I forget you?" she said simply. "You were my only tie to France after mother died; and, since I learned that you were not my brother, the tie seems even more tender, for if you have no sister by blood, I must be one to you by affection, my brother."

It was strange; but these words struck a certain chill to the heart of Jean Cannon.

"But I am not your brother," he said in a low voice. "I do not even know who I am. I only know one thing, Fifine, that, if you will fly with me, I will take the risk of all Abd-el-Kader's bullets and swords, that I may take you back to France as my wife."

To his surprise and mortification Fifine drew back from him.

"You mistake," she said, coldly. "I came here to-night at the risk of my life, to meet my dear brother, Jean Cannon. As for being your wife, that is impossible."

Jean started back.

"Impossible!" he echoed.

"Yes, impossible."

"And why?"

"Because you have come too late."

"But you said that it was not too late."

"Not too late to see and greet you, my brother, before I bid you farewell forever; but too late for any other thought."

The chasseur was petrified.

"Explain, if you please, mademoiselle," he said in a stifled voice. "I heard to-day that you were to marry—I hope—is it true? Oh, Fifine, do not say that you love a Pagan! I have longed so for this hour, and now—"

He paused, unable to continue.

"Listen, my brother," said the girl softly. "I am a most unhappy creature, but I have retained my honor and truth amid a hundred dangers; and it was only when all my countrymen deserted me, that I gave my word, which must not be broken, to marry the Emir Yusuf. Will you hear me?"

"Continue," he said sadly. "Let me hear what has caused Fifine to forget her country and her religion at once."

"I forget neither, monsieur. If you have nothing but reproaches to offer, let us part."

She seemed about to leave him; but he said in a broken voice:

"Go on. I will say no more. Only tell me."

"I will. You remember when you saw me at Toulon?"

"Too well, Fifine. That night changed the whole course of my life. Till then I was a careless boy. That made me a desperate man; who only wished for death."

"You are wrong, Jean. Brave men do not despair. There are hundreds of women in the world fairer—"

"But only one Fifine."

The interruption did not displease her. No woman dislikes to be adored in vain.

"Listen, my brother. Had you been able to claim me then; had you done some bold deed to take me from the Arabs' power, I should have loved you forever. But you did not."

"How could I? I was a soldier, and the colonel told me my first duty was to France."

"Very good. As a soldier you may have been right, but as a lover you were wrong. I waited and waited till my heart was sick. Years passed on, and you never came. I was ordered one day before the Emir, who told me he had noticed me with favor, and had resolved to bestow me on his adopted son, the Emir Yusuf. That was three months ago, Jean."

"And you?"

"I had never seen the Emir Yusuf, and I hated the idea of being the slave of a stranger. I was a Christian and a slave, with no rights. I resolved to appeal to the only Frenchman I

knew to be here, Abou Goum, the renegade. I was mad, desperate. I feigned sickness to get him near me as a physician, and gave him a note, asking him to meet me at the Lion's Rock."

"I know it. What was your object?"

"I knew that any man who would dare to come to such a place would dare to help me escape; and I tried him."

"Suppose he had come?"

"I should have fled with him."

"Indeed. But in such a case—"

"I should have been in his power. Yes, but I said to myself that it was better to be in the power of a Christian than a Pagan. And I can take care of myself. See here."

She showed him a small poniard.

"That is poisoned. One scratch would kill the strongest man. I kept it as a last resort against insult."

"But if he had behaved honestly, there was still the lion. The danger—"

"Is nothing, as you shall see. Hark, here he comes now."

As she spoke, they heard a tremendous roar that seemed to proceed from almost under their feet, and the chasseur started with a cold sweat all over him.

Fifine actually laughed.

"It sounds terrible, does it not, Jean? But I have heard it so often that I fear it not. See, I have had nothing to do for ten years but watch the lion, and I know all his ways. He is not bad, only hungry. Give him something to eat, and he will never harm you. He will be quiet to-night, for I have provided for him. Look!"

Far below them on the face of the steep rock, they saw two glowing green balls of fire, and Jean shuddered in spite of himself. The green fireballs were stationary.

"He is looking at us," whispered Fifine; "and thinking whether it is worth while to come up here after us, when he has better food close beside him."

"What food?" asked the chasseur.

As if to answer the question, they heard a scrambling struggle below, and the pitiful bleat of a goat in extreme terror.

"He is tied there," whispered the girl. "See, the Sultan has chosen him."

The green balls of fire disappeared.

"He has turned his head," said the girl.

"Now listen, and you will hear him go to his feast in peace."

Another scramble and a pitiful bleat, drowned by the roar of the king of the desert, then a dead silence.

"He is drinking the blood," whispered the girl. From henceforth we are safe. Let us continue our conversation."

It was remarkable that this delicate girl showed less timidity than the hardy soldier—such is the influence of familiarity; and she continued as if nothing had happened, while the lion, not a hundred feet below, lay with his eyes closed, drinking the blood of the unfortunate goat.

"You see," continued Fifine, "that there are worse dangers than lions. But let me go on. The renegade dared not come, and I was to be given to the Emir Yusuf as a slave, in three days. Only one choice remained to me. If I hoped to escape the miserable lot of a slave I must become a free woman. In only one way could I do that, save by escaping."

"And that way was?"

"To embrace Islam. Once a believer, the Emir must free me, and I could become no man's slave henceforth. I did so, and the Emir was compelled to free me and announce that his son, Yusuf, had asked for me in marriage."

"And you consented?"

"I did."

"And why?"

"Because it is better to be the honored wife of an Arab chief than a girl without parents among strangers."

"But the Emir—"

"Had no further call to protect me after I had changed my religion. I had the choice between beggary and marrying Yusuf."

"I do not understand you, Fifine. You say you had a choice only between beggary and marriage. How was it?"

"It was this way: While I was a Christian I was a slave, and my master was bound to take care of me. As soon as I became free I was obliged to take care of myself, and a woman can do nothing in this country but starve or marry. It is true I could have become a professional dancing-girl, but if you knew what they are you would not wonder I refused such a lot. No. I have made my decision and must abide by it. I shall never see France again, and I will try my best to make a good wife to the Emir Yusuf, who is brave and good."

The chasseur turned away with a sick feeling of jealousy at his heart, saying:

"It is well. I have followed you amid a thousand dangers and have found you at last; not the Fifine that I loved, but a woman who has sold herself to be the head of an Arab harem."

He felt very bitter and angry, and this time the girl seemed to feel for him; for she said, in a gentle, soothing tone:

"Do not reproach me, my brother. Is not

my lot hard enough to bear as it is? Do you think it is nothing for me to renounce forever the hope of seeing France? It is our fate to be unhappy. Who can defy fate?"

"I would defy it to-night," he said, impetuously, "if I only knew one thing."

"And what is that?"

"That you do not love this Yusuf. Ah, you are silent. Then I am indeed unhappy."

He turned away, and was about to leave her, when they heard the clink of steel on stone not far off, and the lion below lifted his enormous head and showed his glowing green eyes with an ominous growl like muttered thunder.

Fifine clutched the soldier's arm.

"We are watched," she whispered. "It must be a bold man who is near us. Stand still and do not utter a sound. I will be here to-morrow night at the same hour. When the lion returns to his meal move away. If he growls, stand still."

Then Jean Cannon felt his arm released and stood watching the lion, sensible, for the first time, that he was in danger from the beast below.

All had now become perfectly still, but the glowing eyes of the lion remained in the same spot, glaring upward.

The cold sweat stood on the chasseur's forehead; but he stood perfectly still, and after awhile he heard the renewed crunching of bones which showed that the grim beast had returned to its meal.

Then he began to steal away.

The lion turned its eyes toward him, but made no attempt to stop him beyond a smothered rattling growl, and he succeeded in getting to the corner of the wall, where the rest of the garden lay open before him.

As he did so, the rays of the rising moon shone into his face over the tops of the trees in the forest and Jean Cannon saw that an Arab with a long gun in his hands was kneeling beside the wall as if watching for the lion.

This man made no motion when the chasseur appeared, but remained in the same spot and Jean Cannon slowly approached him and discovered to his intense surprise that the watcher was none other than Yusuf ben Saadi.

"Peace be unto you," said the soldier.

"Unto you peace," was the grave response which closed Jean's knowledge of Arabic.

Then Yusuf ben Saadi rose softly to his feet, took the Frenchman by the arm and led him back into the garden for some distance before he said another word.

Then he halted and called out:

"Abou Goum! Abou Goum!"

Jean Cannon heard a rustle in the garden and found himself surrounded by a number of Arabs with long guns, who must have been hiding and watching.

Among these was the renegade, who came forward like one in extreme fear, and to whom Yusuf spoke in Arabic.

"The chief says," explained Abou Goum to the soldier, "that you must not go out there again. You do not know what danger there is, and he is responsible for your life."

"Tell the chief," responded Jean Cannon, "that Frenchmen never fear anything. I went there to look at the lion, and if he is afraid himself I will kill the beast myself to-morrow night."

When Abou Goum had translated this speech, there was a hum of incredulity among the Arabs and Yusuf replied:

"It does not become a brave man to boast of what he can do. What do the French know about the Sultan? We know him and fear him, and we are no cowards. We know that the lion will kill a whole tribe of armed men if he be angry. Let this Frenchman keep within the palace after dark, for we cannot let him sacrifice his life."

"And I say," retorted Jean Cannon firmly, "that I can and will kill the lion if the chief will let me have my arms for to-morrow night. Tell him this and tell him that if the lion does not come I will wait for him till he does come, for I am resolved to show the French nation is afraid of nothing."

Yusuf listened gravely and asked:

"Is the Frank willing to give us a writing to show the Frank chiefs that we are not responsible for his death if he do this foolish thing?"

"I am perfectly willing," replied Jean.

He realized that the liberty to hunt the lion would be an unlimited cloak to cover his meeting with Fifine and eagerly embraced the opportunity.

"Not that I have any hope of killing the lion," he thought to himself. "But as long as I can find goats for his majesty he will stay below."

Yusuf ben Saadi seemed to be uneasy at the readiness with which the soldier accepted the proposition.

"It depends on the consent of the most holy Emir Abd-el-Kader," he observed, "and if the Frank gets killed his blood be on his own head. Let us go now. Night is for sleep in time of peace. We are not watching for the enemy."

He led the way back to the palace and personally conducted Jean Cannon to the apartments provided for him, where the soldier was



fain to remain, though he would much rather have returned to the garden, on the chance of seeing Fifine. He lay on the divan, broad awake, half the night revolving his position.

Did Fifine love this Yusuf? Did the Arabs outside of Abou Goum suspect his own connection with the girl? Would Abou Goum betray him? Had Yusuf ben Saadi heard him talking? Was he honest in his apparent solicitude to save Jean's life from the lion, or was he only playing a part?

All these questions vexed him not a little but he could not solve them; so he lay awake racking his brain to no purpose, till his eyes grew heavy and he fell fast asleep.

There let us leave him, while we return to the camp of Bou Farik.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE BROTHERS OF THE BLACK CLOUD.

FROM the day of Corporal Cannon's departure from the camp at Bou Farik, the Arabs were no more seen on the plain around the fort.

They seemed to have vanished utterly from the country, and all the scouting parties that could be detached found no traces of them, save in the little mud-walled villages, where a few ragged cultivators eked out a scanty existence out of the remains of the harvest left by the French.

Colonel Bugeaud improved the opportunity of rest to extend his lines and strengthen his position, while a regular line of diligences began to run between the City of Algiers and Bou Farik.

In the midst of these his labors, one day, he was informed that a corporal wished to see him with a note from Captain Lemaître and a tall gaunt man with a grizzled sandy beard presented the note.

This missive merely said:

"The bearer, Corporal Neil Krapp, is one of the best soldiers in the command, except for a love of wine. He wants to ask a favor, and I have consented, if you are willing."

"JULES LEMAITRE, Captain."

"Well, corporal," asked Father Bugeaud "and what can I do for you?"

"A good deal, my colonel. I have lost my only friend, and I want leave to go after him."

"And who is your friend?"

"Corporal Cannon, my colonel."

"Corporal Cannon! Why, he is in the camp of Abd-el-Kader, and heaven knows if he will ever get back alive."

"That is why I want to go after him, my colonel."

Father Bugeaud looked surprised.

"You! But you forget. Corporal Cannon went under the protection of the Arabs, and unless they violate hospitality he is safe. But you could never reach the Arab camp alone. You have no protector."

"If my colonel will let me try, I have a plan that will take me there."

"You are crazy, corporal. It is enough to risk one man. You cannot go."

Krapp looked much disappointed.

"Very well, my colonel. But you do not know my plan. I can talk Arabic."

"You can? Where did you learn it?"

"Many years ago, my colonel, before I entered the French service."

"Ah! then you are not a Frenchman?"

"No, my colonel. I am a Dane, that is to say, a wanderer over all the earth, with every language as good as my own, and none very good."

"But how did you get into our army, when we admit no foreigners?"

"I entered before the law was passed, my colonel, that is to say before the battle of Leipsic."

Colonel Bugeaud looked at him with more interest and observed:

"Then you are a veteran of the Empire?"

"I am, my colonel. I entered the service in 1812, and passed through the Russian campaign. I was then twenty-five. Now I am getting near fifty; but as good as ever."

"Well, tell me, then, why you want to go on such a desperate service, corporal."

"Simply, my colonel, because I have been thinking of late that I can resolve a great mystery by following my friend to the camp of Abd-el-Kader."

"A mystery? Explain."

"I cannot, my colonel. 'Tis but an idea I have, and if it be wrong you will say I was a fool to entertain it. All I ask is leave of absence for six months. I have not had a leave for ten years."

Father Bugeaud hesitated.

"The leave is easy to grant, since we are in winter-quarters, but I cannot grant it if I know you are going to try penetrating to the camp of Abd-el-Kader."

"You need know nothing about it, my colonel. All I ask is the leave, and permission to take with me my horse and arms."

"That, too, could be done, but only if the quartermaster and your captain were relieved of responsibility."

"I have settled that already, my colonel. If you sign the leave, I have paid into the military

chest the amount necessary to cover the cost of my outfit."

Colonel Bugeaud was more astonished than ever, and exclaimed:

"Is that the case? Then how comes it that a man who is able to deposit three thousand francs in the treasury is a simple corporal in the African chasseurs?"

Neil Krapp smiled.

"A friend paid it for me, my colonel."

"What is his name?"

"He is a Moor, my colonel, named Abd-el-Rachman."

"A Moor! Where did you meet him?"

"In a lodge of the Brothers of the Black Cloud, my colonel."

Colonel Bugeaud started and stared at the Dane in amazement. He had heard that there was a secret order among the Arabs entitled the Brothers of the Black Cloud, which was said to be allied to Free Masonry, but into which no Frenchman had ever been admitted, though many had sought to enter in the lodge at Algiers.

"When did you join them?" he asked presently.

"Twenty years ago, my colonel."

"Then you have been in Algiers before?"

"Yes, my colonel."

Colonel Bugeaud began playing with a pen drumming on the table with a thoughtful and absentminded manner, while the Dane stood patiently watching him.

At last he said abruptly:

"If I let you go it is understood that you use any information you may get for the service of France, corporal."

"That is impossible, my colonel."

"And why?"

"Because if I go it will be under the protection of the Brothers and we know no distinction of politics or religion. You are aware of that in other orders, my colonel."

As he spoke he looked his chief in the face and made a peculiar sign at which the colonel exclaimed:

"Ah! are you there?"

Colonel and corporal clasped hands, and Bugeaud said in a low tone:

"Since you are a Brother, I am compelled to grant your request, though, as a soldier, I know it is a foolish one. I will sign the furlough at once."

He pulled out a furlough blank and filled it out with his own hand, when Neil Krapp took it, saying gravely:

"As a soldier I thank my colonel; and as a soldier I will do my duty to France; but as a Brother I will see that no harm comes to my French brethren through my mission."

Then he retired from the tent and went to the sutler's marquee, round which was gathered quite a little colony of Moorish tents occupied by wandering peddlers who came under the protection of the French flag to trade with the soldiers.

In one of these tents sat a short, gray-bearded man, with broad shoulders and a coarse face, a thick nose and large mouth, very unlike the usual refined Arab features. This man was richly dressed in Moorish fashion, and was selling pipes and tobacco to the soldiers, apparently driving a thriving trade to good advantage; for his stock was nearly sold out, and he kept dropping the francs and half francs into a huge leather purse at his girdle.

Neil Krapp walked into this man's tent and saluted him in Arabic.

"It is done. I am ready to depart with you whenever you think best."

The Moor kept on selling as he answered:

"I shall be ready when I have sold these few pipes. You have a horse?"

"Yes, my own, that I captured from an Arab. Have you a speedy animal?"

"I have one that it will puzzle you to pass on the road. Go and get ready. I will meet you outside the gate."

He went quietly on with his selling, talking a little broken French at rare intervals to his customers; but generally using the language of signs, till the last pipe was gone, when he closed his purse, summoned two black slaves by clapping his hands, and left them to take down the little tent and pack it on a camel.

As for himself, he mounted a handsomely-caparisoned horse that had been standing patiently by the tent all this time and rode away out of the camp, displaying a pass at the guard-house before he departed.

Out over the plain of Bou Farik he rode, desecrating, far in advance, a solitary figure on horseback riding toward the mountains in a direction away from Algiers.

The Moor put his horse to a canter, and after a half-hour's ride came close enough to this figure to perceive that it was a French chasseur in full uniform, covered by a white cloak to keep off the dust.

As he came up behind the soldier turned and called out in Danish:

"Holla, old Hansen, what made you boast of your horse? It's taken you a long time to overhaul me, and I was not trying to ride fast."

The Moor laughed and replied in the same language:

"You were always good at running, Krapp, as the police found when they hunted for you after the duel with the Russian. Let us walk our horses."

The ease with which he spoke showed that he was using his native tongue, and Krapp observed:

"Who would ever have thought that little Hans Hansen, that used to get more floggings than any boy in father Holsen's school, all on account of his geography, would some day be a Moorish merchant, who knows every port in the Mediterranean, and talks Arabic so well that half the people forget he was ever a slave?"

Hans Hansen allowed a slight grin to cross his rugged Norse features as he said:

"It was no fault of mine I came here, any more than dozens of others. There are plenty of renegades all round the country, and they are the best men the Arabs have got. If you have a taste that way, I can put you where you will be a rich man in ten years."

Neil Krapp shook his head.

"Not in this country, Hans. It will not be ten years before these French will have it all to themselves. If I wanted to enter a service I would go to India. There is a good chance for a man there, I have heard."

"There is enough here, too, if a man be content with enough to end his days in peace in his own country. I shall be ready to go home in another year."

Neil Krapp sighed.

"Ay, ay, you were always good at the getting of money. I was always fond of a fight and I've had enough of it to last me till I die. In the mean time, Hansen, tell me what you know about these boys."

"What boys? I never said boys. I said one boy, that's all."

"Well, one boy then. How long is it since you saw him and where?"

"It was in Italy, in the mountains near Naples in 1809."

"The very year," said Krapp eagerly. "How came you there and what saw you?"

Hansen cogitated a while and answered:

"Don't hurry me. It's all a matter of memory and I've nearly forgotten all that took place before I was a slave. I was with a French duke, a great traveler. He had taken me at Copenhagen for his body servant, because I had a trick of shaving that he used to say was the lightest hand he had ever set under. You know I was bred a barber. Well, in those mountains we met the troop of brigands headed by Cornaro and Cartouche and my master and I were captured. It was while they had us up the mountains that I saw this baby and heard the brigands say he was the son of the Danish ambassador at Naples. That is all."

"And you. Did you escape or were you ransomed from the robbers?"

"Neither. The band was broken up by the French troops; my master killed by the robbers in spite, and the rest of us, myself among the number, fled to the sea-shore, stole a boat and put to sea, baby and all."

"Why did you not run away?"

"You wouldn't have asked that question if you had been in my place. I had to stay with them or get shot at by both sides."

"Well, what happened in the boat?"

"We were picked up, almost in sight of Naples, by an Algerine galley and all made slaves."

"Yes, and then?"

Krapp waited eagerly for the answer.

"And then? That's all. Here I've been ever since, till I turned Hans Hansen into Abd-el-Rachman, the pipe-seller."

"But the child. What became of it?"

"It was sold in open market to an Arab chief, whose son I knew then as being the same person now called Abd-el-Kader."

Krapp drew a deep breath.

"Then it may be the same. Strange that two men who had never seen each other, should be such images, one of each other. If it be indeed the boy I mean I shall know him by a private mark that was on the baby. But tell me, Hansen, are you sure that there was only one child there? Did none of the robbers talk about there having been twins?"

"Not that I remember. Stay, it may be so, but if it were, the other one must have died. I only saw one, a stout boy with blue eyes."

Krapp sighed.

"It is too much to hope to find both; but if it were only possible how much joy it would bring to the old castle of Lindholm."

Hansen laughed rather sneeringly.

"Perhaps. On the other hand it might not do any such thing."

"And why not?"

"My poor Krapp, you soldiers have not a particle of knowledge of the world. By this time the castle of Lindholm has been in quiet possession of the heirs for twenty years. Suppose you find your master's twin children how can you prove who they are, and what welcome, think you, will they receive from the people they would despoil of their inheritance?"

"That's true enough," said Krapp gloomily. "I never thought of that. What bad people there are in this world, Hansen."



"Plenty of them. The only way to make them all good is to have plenty of money. And now I have told you all this, tell me how it comes that you obtained entrance into the Black Cloud twenty years ago, when I, who have lived here twenty-two years was only admitted two seasons ago."

"Simple enough, my friend. I was a rover with the Algerines myself, once on a time. You know we Danes take naturally to being pirates like our ancestors."

"And when were you with them, Neil?"

"When I was a boy of sixteen and I staid with them till I was twenty-one, when I got into one fight too many."

"How was that?"

"Our vessel sighted a Danish brig and took her for a merchantman. She turned out to be a brig of war in disguise and took us."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, and on board, going to Naples was no less a person than Count Lindholm, my master. He was a passenger and he saved my life when all the rest were hung at the yard-arm. That is why I would have given my life at any time to serve him. He was my master from that day forth and a good one too."

"But he was killed."

"Yes, by my side. And when I found I was not to die I took a solemn oath never to rest till I had found my master's children and restored them to their inheritance."

"It seems to me, Neil Krapp," observed the pipe-seller presently, "that you have heard of Christians turning Pagans from necessity like myself; but you say you joined the Algerine pirates from choice."

"It is true, my friend. I can only say in excuse that I was a boy then and led away by the romance of the life. After I found out what they were I never shed a man's blood in anger; but have saved many from death. And all the memory I have of those days is that I have a stain to wipe out if it can be effaced with my own blood."

As he spoke they neared the mountains.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE THIRTY-NINTH DUEL.

THE Emir Abd-el-Kader was seated in his private chamber on a divan, while before him, in an attitude of deep respect, stood his adopted son, Yusuf ben Saadi.

"Continue, my son," said the Emir in a grave tone. "You say that you have a suspicion of the fidelity of Aicha, whom I have promised you for a wife."

"I have more than a suspicion, my father. I heard her, last night, talking to this Giaour, for whose life my word is passed."

"Then let the Giaour expiate his fault by the sword. He has profaned the rites of hospitality and deserves death."

"Not so, my father."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that it is necessary for the good of Islam that he should live to teach our soldiers how to fight in the way of these strangers. If it be necessary, who is Yusuf, your property, your slave that he should stand in the way? Let this Frank take Aicha to wife. Yusuf ben Saadi takes no woman to his bosom if she love any other man. It is well to be wise in time."

"My son is wise beyond his years. It is not the nature of youth to be so cold. Is it that you care not for Aicha?"

Yusuf closed his lips firmly and changed color as he answered:

"No. But when Yusuf weds, there must be none to say of his wife, 'She met and talked with a Frank at night!'"

Abd-el-Kader seemed to be disturbed as he looked at the young man.

"Were there any who heard her speak to this man besides yourself?"

Yusuf's eyes gleamed.

"None, or he would not be alive. He knows not that I heard him."

"Where were they?"

"Outside the harem wall, above the Rock of the Lion, my father."

The Emir looked surprised.

"There! Why, there is not a man in our camp dare go there at night. Was this Frank armed?"

"No, my father."

"Then, by Allah, he must be a brave man, or a fool, under heaven's protection."

"He is a brave man, my father."

The admission came from the young Arab in a reluctant tone, as if wrung from him; but he added with more generosity:

"He is the bravest man I ever saw. He has offered to go alone to night to kill the lion if we do not stop him."

"Let him go," said Abd-el-Kader quickly. "If he slay the lion, it is well. If the lion slay him, it is well too. My son will not be troubled by him any more, and Aicha will turn to him when the other is dead."

The young Arab curled his lip slightly.

"Yusuf takes no woman that has lost a lover. He must be first or nothing."

The Emir looked thoughtfully at him and seemed to be pondering something.

At last he said:

"I will send for Aicha. I have known her since she was a child, and have found her to be truthful above all women. Besides she must be as brave as Rustam if she could talk calmly to a lover above the Lion's Rock at night. Such a woman would not lie to save herself from death. Tell me, my son, was the lion out last night?"

"Did not my father hear him roar?"

"True. I did. But it seemed afar off."

"He came up the path and took a goat that had been tied there. I found the mark of the stake this morning and the print of a woman's foot near the stake."

"A woman's foot?"

"Yes, my father; and it was Aicha herself that tied it there. It is plain that this man is her lover, and has come here to aid her in escaping from us."

Abd-el-Kader frowned, and a cold, cruel look came across his face.

"You may be right," he said. "I thought I knew his countenance. Now I remember, it is the same dog that leaped on the stage and laid his hand on Aicha herself, two years ago. He must die."

Yusuf raised his downcast eyes.

"He shall die, and she too; but it must be by my hand, when they think they are the most happy; and none must know why they die, for it is not fitting that the name of my father should be shamed, when men say he could not protect his harem from the intrusion of a Giaour."

"My son is right. Therefore let me send for Aicha, and find from her if she love this Frank or not."

"My father speaks like the chief of his tribe. And if she love the Frank, let my father give his consent to the marriage. The Infidel will then enter my father's service."

"And what then?" asked the Emir.

"And then," continued Yusuf, his eyes sparkling, "then, when the wedding feast is spread and the fool thinks all is safe, then let him take care of himself, for then will be the hour of my vengeance."

The Emir smiled coldly, with a certain pride in the young man, as he replied:

"Be it as you will. In the mean time let us send for Aicha. Do you retire into my closet, and hear what passes."

Yusuf bowed and retired into a little room behind the divan, when the Emir clapped his hands and said to the slave who appeared:

"Tell the *kistara* aga to bring to me Aicha, that I may speak with her."

The black retired, and soon after the chief of the harem guards appeared, leading Aicha, otherwise Fifine, closely veiled.

"Let the slaves retire," said Abd-el-Kader. "Let Aicha remain."

The girl stood silently before him, with her hands folded on her bosom in the attitude of respect she had been taught.

"Remove your veil," said the Emir. "I would see your face, to find if it be yet the face of the Moslem maiden I set free and promised to my son Yusuf for a wife."

The girl un veiled and stood before him, with a pale face and an expression of defiant humility that irritated the Arab.

"You were talking to a man last night," he said, harshly. "What have you to say?"

"Nothing," she answered, briefly.

"Is it true?"

"It is true."

"Who was the man?"

"My brother."

The Emir started and the expression of his face changed to one more kind.

"Your brother?" he echoed. "Are you willing to have him brought here that we may see if you tell the truth?"

"I am willing," she answered. "As for the spy that listened behind the wall, let him come again to my lord with his tales. Aicha fears not the truth. I met the man, whom I have not seen for ten years. He is my brother and came hither to seek me."

The Emir looked at her searchingly.

"How know you that any man listened behind the wall, Aicha?" he asked.

"Because I heard him when his sword struck against the stones, and I knew that there was only one man in the Emir's palace would dare to come so near the lion."

"And who was that, Aicha?"

"Yusuf ben Saadi, who draws his courage from a source he little suspects."

Abd-el-Kader looked puzzled.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

The captive girl drew herself up, and her eyes gleamed with pride.

"I mean that he is of *our* blood; not *yours*. No Arab would dare what he dared last night, and that makes it all the more shame for him to betray his own blood, as he has done when he came to you with his tales."

For the first time in the interview the Arab chief appeared to be disturbed; for he rebuked her harshly, saying:

"You are a daughter of the Evil One and know not what you say. Be silent. I will see to this matter myself. You say this Frank is your brother. If it prove so, I pardon you; but

if he prove to be your lover, woe betide you. Retire!"

He summoned the harem guardian and Aicha retired haughtily.

When she was gone, Yusuf ben Saadi came forth from his concealment, looking pale and angry, and the Emir asked:

"Did you hear her my son?"

"Ay, my father, I heard her. She seeks to dishonor me by casting a stain on my blood; but it shall not avail her. All the tribe knows that I am the son of Saadi, who died in battle with the infidels, and that I spit on all Christians. I was a fool to think of marrying Aicha. She is a Christian still at heart."

He seemed to be incensed at the bare idea that he was accused of being other than an Arab by blood, and Abd-el-Kader smiled as one well pleased.

In truth, the Emir loved his adopted son with a devotion that was made more fervent by the fact that he had carefully concealed from him the circumstances of his entrance into the tribe by adoption, and none of the Arabs had dared to speak of the subject, so that it might come to the young chief's ears; though it was a matter of common report throughout the tribes.

In those days, owing to the previous habits of the Algerines as corsairs, the country was full of renegades and adopted children of Christians, who were noticeable as being the fiercest and most fanatical in their devotion to Islam, and Yusuf was no exception to the rule.

Abd-el-Kader was therefore well pleased at the way in which his adopted son had taken Aicha's revelation, and continued:

"Let us send now for the Frank. We will ask him if this woman be his sister, and Allah will direct us aright in our course, after he has spoken."

Yusuf nodded sullenly.

"Let him come. Shall I retire again?"

"Do so, my son."

Then the chief summoned another slave, and ordered that the Frank who had come there the day before should be admitted to an audience with the interpreter Abou Goum, adding:

"Let there be two more interpreters of the converts present, that we may tell if this Abou Goum translates our words correctly."

A little while afterward, Corporal Cannon, in his chasseur dress, and wearing, as a special favor, his sword, was introduced to the presence of the Emir, whom he found attended by three grim-looking Arabs, in whom no one would have recognized the renegade Frenchmen they really were.

Only Abou Goum knew them, and he felt decidedly uneasy as he marked this evidence of mistrust on the part of the Emir toward him as an interpreter.

As for Jean Cannon, he advanced boldly before the Arab potentate, and saluted in the military style, when Abd-el-Kader said in a harsh tone:

"Tell the Infidel it is the custom of our country that men bow before me and do obeisance as to the emissary of God."

"And it is the custom of *my* country," said Jean Cannon, when this speech was given to him by Abou Goum, "that our soldiers stand upright before the king himself, and salute as I have done. Is Abd-el-Kader a greater man than our king, who has three-hundred thousand soldiers under his orders? I bow to no man, and only kneel in church."

Abd-el-Kader frowned.

"Let the executioner be summoned," he said harshly. "Tell this son of a burnt father that he must do obeisance to me, or lose his head."

"I can lose my head easily," answered the chasseur boldly; "but if you will let your executioner alone with me for five minutes, you will see whose head will come off."

The chief ground his teeth furiously and made a sign, when in a moment a tall negro strode into the room, carrying in his arms a long cimeter in a gorgeous sheath, and exclaiming:

"Seyd, the son of Selim, is ready. Let the gracious Emir give his orders, and he shall see the heads fall like ripe apples."

"There is your man," said Abd-el-Kader in his sternest tone, pointing to Jean Cannon. "He says that you cannot kill him alone."

The executioner laughed and looked at the chasseur with scorn.

"I should not want such an one held," he observed contemptuously. "I will throw him down alone."

The Emir smiled.

His jaded tastes, used to the excitements of unbridled power, craved a fresh sensation. He had seen heads fall by the dozen at the hands of this same executioner, but the victims had always been held fast.

To see a man beheaded in spite of all the resistance he could offer, was a new idea. Meantime, Jean Cannon, not knowing what was going on, yet recognized the figure of the executioner, and realized that he was in grave danger.

The negro was a giant in stature and seemed capable of crushing any common man with one hand.

The Arabs in the room drew away to the sides of the walls, and Abd-el-Kader said:



"Tell the Frank to take care of himself if he can. My executioner will cut off his head or make him do obeisance."

Abou Goum translated the sentence, and in a moment Jean Cannon flashed out his sword and cried defiantly:

"Let me see him do it."

"What does he say?" cried Seyd fiercely.

"He says, kill him if you can," answered Abou Goum with a laugh.

The huge negro echoed the laugh, and drew his long saber, throwing the scabbard to the floor with a clash.

Then he made profound obeisance to the Emir and observed vauntingly:

"The noble Abd-el-Kader shall see this infidel beheaded by his slave, before he can make a cry."

He strode toward the chasseur extending his huge left hand to grasp him, when, quick as a flash, Jean made a cut at the hand, and, had it not been withdrawn with equal quickness, would have taken it off.

Seyd uttered a snarl like a wild beast, and made a feint at Jean's head, which the chasseur met with his sword, and in another moment had retaliated with a slash in the face that laid the negro's nose in half and caused him to roar with pain and fury.

He started back, the blood streaming from his face, and then made a bound at Jean, who slipped to one side and evaded the clumsy rush, then closed in behind Seyd's back, and threw him flat on his face with a skillful trip, against which the negro, with all his strength, was helpless.

In another moment the long sword of the Frenchman was pressing against Seyd's back, as he lay, half stunned, and Corporal Cannon cried out:

"Quick! shall I kill him?"

"He was looking at Abd-el-Kader as he spoke knowing that the Emir understood a little French, and the Arab hastily exclaimed:

"No, no."

The chasseur leaped back and stood ready to renew the assault, as Seyd began to struggle up; but Abd-el-Kader cried out:

"Let the son of Selim go back. He is not fit to be an executioner. The Frank shall live."

The negro was too much used to passive obedience to hesitate when he received this order, and he slowly retired, trying to stanch the blood from his face, while Jean Cannon coolly wiped his sword and observed:

"Tell the Emir that was only play. Had the man been taught well, he would make a bad one to handle. But he knows nothing. It was like butchering an ox."

The Arab chief smiled coldly when he heard this remark, and answered:

"I see that the Frank is a king among the fighters. I will excuse his obeisance, for the way in which he uses a sword. Ask him if he is willing to enter my service, as he said he would, if I gave him a wife!"

"Tell the Emir," answered Corporal Cannon, "that I have seen all his Christian slaves, and do not like any of them. I came here after my sister. If he will give her to me, I am ready to enter his service."

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

##### ON THE WATCH.

ABD-EL-KADER looked fixedly at the bold Frenchman and demanded:

"Who is your sister, that you say she is here, and how know you she is here?"

"My faith, simple enough. As for who she is, I do not know what your Arabs call her, but she is Fifi Cannon, stolen from us at ten years old, and the same whom I saw and recognized on the stage at Toulon, two years since, as the Emir knows."

The chief smiled slightly. He saw that the chasseur said nothing about the meeting of the previous night, and he did not wish it to be spoken of before the interpreters.

"Well," he said, more graciously, "if you will enter our service, and teach our men the way your people fight, I will give you your sister, if indeed she be your sister."

He wished to entrap the chasseur into an admission of what he suspected to be a deception; but Jean was too wary for him.

"There is no doubt about it," he answered.

"We were brought up together in the same house, and I never knew the difference. Then I suppose I can see her now, whenever I please, can I?"

"Have you seen her already?" asked the chief, keenly, to entrap him.

"Of course I have. You should remember it. I know I do, for it cost me my first arrest," retorted the corporal, readily.

Abd-el-Kader smiled again. He was beginning to like this bold fellow for his ready wit.

"Be it so," he said. "You shall enter my service, with apartments in my palace; and you can see your sister in the presence of the chief of the harem guards, but only veiled. You must know she has embraced our faith, and is to be married to my son, the Emir Yusuf ben Saadi."

He watched the Frenchman keenly as Abou Goum translated this speech, expecting to see

some signs of jealousy; but Jean had put too close a guard on himself for that.

"If my sister must marry out of her own people," he said, indifferently, "I would rather she would wed a chief than a common man. When do I commence my duties, and who is my first pupil at the sword?"

"You shall begin to-morrow, and I will send you six chiefs. When you have taught them, they shall teach their people. How long will it take to teach them?"

The Frenchman appeared to be thinking, and at last drawled out:

"Well, perhaps a year; perhaps three. It depends on how quick they are. And in the mean time, remember that a man who knows a little only about the sword is no more use than a sheep."

Abd-el-Kader looked incredulous.

"What is this you say? I thought that you could teach them all in a few weeks."

Jean Cannon laughed.

"That is what a good many think till they find out that there are more ways than one to handle a sword. But I am ready to begin whenever your highness wishes. In the mean time I have a favor to ask."

"What is that?"

"Permission to take my gun and go out to-night to kill that lion that disturbs my rest."

The Arab's eyes glistened.

"And why do you want to risk your life?"

"Simply because he makes so much noise at night that I cannot sleep."

"Do you not know," asked the Emir, "that the lion is the best guardian I can have for my house? None venture near the wall above the Lion's Rock while the Sultan watches."

"There is one man who will venture there if you will give him leave."

"Say two, my father."

It was the voice of Yusuf that spoke, and the young Arab came out of the room behind the divan and advanced to the Emir's feet.

"I will go with this Frank," he said, "and show him that he is no braver than we are."

Abd-el-Kader bowed his head gravely.

"Be it as you wish," he said.

Jean Cannon stared at the young Arab as he came in, and wondered what he was saying; but Abou Goum did not offer to translate the dialogue between the Emir and his son.

"If he go there," pursued Yusuf, in a low tone, audible only to the Emir, "I will see to it that he attends only to the lion. This son of a burnt father shall not laugh at our beards for nothing."

Then to Abou Goum he said:

"Tell the Frank the Emir consents. He can go after the lion to-night; but if he go, I go too."

"With all my heart," answered the chasseur, gayly. "Only I warn Monsieur Yusuf that the lion will not stand trifling."

"Neither will I," retorted the Arab, meaningly. "Let us see who will go nearest the Sultan to-night, the Frank or I."

After that the Emir broke up the audience by a mute signal, and Jean Cannon returned to his rooms alone, saying to himself:

"This is all very nice, but I fancy that my friend Yusuf has a shrewd idea of what is my object in hunting the lion. Let us see who will get the best of this."

True to the Emir's promise, they brought the chasseur his weapons that morning, and he spent the best part of the day in putting them into order for the undertaking before him. He had but his ordinary smooth-bore musket, for that was before the days of *minié* rifles, but it carried a large bullet, and he took care to have two cartridges of powder to each ball.

"If the Sultan's head is hard enough to flatten a bullet," he said to himself, "it will at least stun him and I can send another through his heart. But to do that, I must let him come close. It would never do to miss."

When he had attended to his weapons he sauntered out into the palace garden and strolled around the little settlement of the Emir's followers in the neighborhood.

He noticed that wherever he went, he was followed by hundreds of curious eyes, and that the glances bestowed on him were rather respectful than otherwise. The Arabs had heard of his offer, and looked on him as a man doomed to destruction, but worthy to be honored for his bravery.

He went out into the outskirts of the little settlement, where the ground descended toward the desert, and admired the desolate immensity of the prospect.

He would have liked to visit one of the Arab camps below; but as soon as he tried to descend, he was stopped by a sentry, who pointed his gun at him with a gesture of warning that was comprehensible enough.

"So it seems I am under surveillance not to leave the garden," he thought. "Well, it is no more than I have a right to expect."

"Let us see how things look at the Lion's Rock. They will not stop me there."

Indeed he was not molested when he walked in that direction, and soon found himself under the harem wall, above the steep path that led down to the Lion's Rock.

As the evening before, the goats were feeding peacefully on the herbage growing along the face of the bank; and, far below, lay the brown desert, dotted with black tents.

Jean Cannon took off his saber, which he tucked under his arm for convenience in climbing, and descended the face of the bank on a tour of discovery.

He marked the place where the lion had been the night before, by the remnants of bones and the horns of the poor goat; but all the rest of the carcass had vanished.

"The Sultan is a clean eater, and leaves no dirty dishes behind him," said Jean to himself. "I wonder where his majesty lives in the daytime. He began to roar last night at the very foot of the hill."

Down he climbed, the goats jumping out of his way and staring at him with much curiosity, till he heard a sharp bleat behind him, and, looking around, saw that one of the goats had been tied to a stake by some one, and was struggling to free itself.

"So that is how they keep his majesty from coming to the top of the hill at night," he thought to himself. "Now, if I loose this poor creature without any one seeing me, it will upset some of their calculations."

Whether the act might bring himself into additional danger he did not care; for Jean Cannon, since his interview with Fifi, was in that desperate state that he welcomed any sort of danger that promised to end his suspense.

He cut the cord that confined the goat to the stake, and the poor creature scampered off to its comrades, and stood bleating its joy, while the chasseur tranquilly continued his descent of the hill.

He thought it rather strange that no one had come after him in broad daylight; but had no notion of danger till he had come near the Lion's Rock, above the pool.

Then he became sensible of a strong odor like musk, that he recognized as that of a wild beast's den, and paused to look round him before he went any further.

"It seems that his majesty must be not very far off," he thought, "unless that be only the smell of hyenas."

He peered all round across the face of the hill, but could see no hiding-place for a beast, while below him the Lion's Rock stood, bare and smooth, with no opportunity for any living creature to be concealed there.

Suddenly his eye caught sight of something moving under one of the date palms by the pool.

It resembled nothing so much as the lash of a cow's tail brushing off the flies.

"It is a tail!" he said to himself. "But where is the beast it belongs to? I see nothing."

He watched attentively but could see no symptoms of any living creature.

The date palms grew out of the brown stems of the dry grass amid the browner sand, but he could detect nothing else.

Presently came the same rapid flap, and this time he saw that it was indeed a long tail with a tuft at the end, while the animal to which it belonged was undoubtedly lying hidden behind the trunk of the palm.

He watched closer than ever, and again the tail flapped, this time very impatiently; and, a moment later, with a snarl and snap, the lion came into view, biting vainly at an impudent insect, and then rolling over to sleep again.

To say that this sight did not affect the nerves of the chasseur would be untrue. He gave a violent start, and the sweat stood on his forehead.

"So that is why they did not follow me," he muttered. "The beast has taken up his abode here, and is lord of the land around him."

Fascinated by the sight of the king of the desert, he stood there watching him for some time.

The lion, on its part, seemed to be taking life very easily, like an alderman after dinner, lying stretched out on its side, and only showing life by an occasional flap of its tail when the flies annoyed it.

It was not five hundred feet away, and the Frenchman could see it distinctly.

"Oh, if I only had my gun here," he thought. "I could take that fellow as he lies, and do the business at once. I wonder if I can get time to fetch it before he wakes."

Softly he turned and began to climb up the hill among the goats.

Every now and then he would turn and look back at the lion; but the brute never stirred from its sleep.

Jean did not know that the secret of this quiescence lay in the fact that the lion, from long impunity and the nightly bribe of a goat, had come to regard the Arabs on the hill above as friends and purveyors, and never troubled itself about them.

It saw the chasseur plainly enough from under its half-closed lids; but did not offer to follow him, and Jean arrived at the top of the hill without further adventure.

Then he turned and looked down, while a spirit of mischief seized him.

A large boulder stood out at the edge of the bank, only slightly attached to the soil; and he



loosened this and sent it rolling down the bank among the goats, noting that its course would take it close to the slumbering lion.

Sure enough, it rolled directly toward the great beast, bounded off the Lion's Rock with a loud crack, and struck the king of the desert in the middle of the back.

The lion started up like a flash, with a sharp roar of pain and alarm, and made a furious pass with its paw at the rolling rock, like a kitten playing with a ball of yarn, but never looked up, and Jean Cannon stole away laughing.

In the garden the first person he came on was Yusuf ben Saadi, to whom he said laughingly:

"Now is your time to show if you are a man. I am going after the lion."

The Arab did not understand him; but he followed him nevertheless to the palace, and when he saw Jean Cannon getting his arms he gave a short exclamation:

"*Tahib!*" [Good.]

He strode away to his own part of the palace; and when the French chasseur came out, soon after, with his gun and a pair of long pistols, he found Yusuf ben Saadi waiting for him, with an Arab musket at least six feet long, and a pair of long Turkish pistols in his sash.

"What, are you coming too?" asked Jean.

Yusuf nodded, as if he understood the tone if not the words; and the two proceeded on their way to the edge of the precipice.

When they got there, they saw the lion walking uneasily up and down by the date palms, while the sun was sinking slowly toward the horizon of the desert.

The Frenchman pointed downward and said to Yusuf:

"Dare you come down?"

Again Yusuf understood the gesture and he bowed his head gravely and advanced to the edge of the precipice.

It did not escape the chasseur's notice that he was very pale; but he showed no other sign of fear, and there was a defiant, haughty smile on his lip, as he glanced at his rival.

Jean stopped him as he was about to descend toward the lion, and said:

"No need of that. Let him come up to us."

Yusuf looked inquiringly at him, and the chasseur sent another stone rolling down the steep bank.

This time the great beast heard and saw the missile coming, and he gave an angry roar and started forward to meet it, as if it had been a live enemy.

On rolled the rock, a mass of some two hundred pounds' weight, and; such was its velocity and the rash anger of the lion, that it knocked the great beast over amid a cloud of dust, and they saw him claw and bite at the stone with all his energy.

The grave face of Yusuf relaxed into a faint smile; but Jean Cannon laughed very heartily as he watched the angry lion fight the insensible rock.

"It is an easy thing to play tricks on his majesty," he observed. "If we must fight him, I would rather do it from the top of this hill than down at the bottom."

As he spoke he sent a third rock rolling down, and this time the lion had learned enough prudence to get out of the way, though he followed and struck viciously at the stone.

Yusuf ben Saadi watched the proceedings with a haughty sneer on his face, and then went up to the Frenchman and made a motion as if daring him to fire his gun at the animal below.

Jean Cannon shook his head.

"Thank you. Not such a fool. If he won't come up here for the rocks, let him stay down."

Yusuf smiled contemptuously; then went to the edge of the precipice, knelt down and took a slow, deliberate aim at the lion with his long Arab musket.

He was about to fire, when Jean pulled up the gun, crying:

"Fool, you'll only enrage him and bring him up here so quickly we'll have no time to take a good aim. Let me try another rock to rouse him up."

Yusuf put his gun down and leaned on the barrel as if resigned, when the chasseur rolled down still another stone.

This time the lion looked up and saw the figures at the edge of the precipice.

The enraged beast uttered a tremendous roar and charged the foot of the steep ascent in a moment.

"Here he comes, sure enough," muttered the chasseur. "Now let us see how high he gets up. There are five hundred feet of steep rock to climb, and he'll be tired out at the rate he is going before he gets to the top to hurt us."

So saying, he cocked his musket and lay down at the top to wait for the lion.

## CHAPTER XIX.

EL KRAPPA.

At the very moment when Yusuf ben Saadi and Jean Cannon lay down to watch the lion climbing toward them, Abd-el-Rachman, the pipe-seller, rode into the palace garden, followed by an Arab, whose gaunt figure and grizzled

beard showed no trace of Krapp, the Dane, beneath the disguise, and saluted the people he met with the customary:

"Peace be unto you."

The new-comer was greeted with courtesy, for he was well known through the country as the best of the traveling merchants, and was inquired of:

"Have you been near the camp of the Franks? Have the accursed ones as many soldiers as they pretend to have?"

"They have them as the sands of the desert, not to be numbered," answered the renegade. "We have come to tell our lord, Abd-el-Kader, all the news. Are there any Franks to be seen here? They told us there was one sent to see the noble Emir."

They told him that the Frank was there and added:

"He is one of those doomed by Allah to die, for he has gone out with Yusuf ben Saadi, even now, to fight the lion, and we are all getting our horses ready to flee."

"For, when the Sultan is angry," said another, "he has no respect for the Emir himself."

Even as he spoke, they heard the first roar of rage given by the lion at the foot of the hill; and the Arabs ran to their horses in a general panic of fear.

"The Sultan comes!" was the cry, and it seemed as if every particle of courage had left them; such was the influence of the superstitious veneration with which they were accustomed to regard the terrible beast.

As for Abd-el-Rachman, the pipe-seller, he turned his horse's head, saying hurriedly to his disguised friend:

"Run while you can. If the lion gets among us once, you'll not get off alive."

But Neil Krapp, who was made of sterner stuff, only unsling from his back the long musket he carried, and allowed the Arabs to gallop away unheeded; while he himself rode deliberately toward the edge of the precipice.

Before he got there, he heard the lion roar a second and a third time, and a moment later saw the figure of his friend, Jean Cannon, with an Arab beside him lying on the grass at the top of the steep descent, pointing his gun down the face of the precipice.

Neil Krapp rode his horse to the brow of the hill and looked over.

The lion was just beginning to leap up, coming as fast as if he had had wings instead of feet.

But this did not last over a dozen or so of bounds, when his weight told on him.

The hill was at least five hundred feet in perpendicular height, and the slope was so steep that even the goats had to zigzag to and fro to ascend it at all.

The lion, a tempting the ascent straight up in his rage, found himself winded and had to stop and pant loudly, half-way to the top.

This was the moment selected by the chasseur to aim a couple of balls at his head, as he sat up on his haunches.

"Bang!"

As the smoke cleared away, Jean Cannon gave a shout of triumph.

The lion was rolling over and over down the steep hill, and never stopped till he got to the bottom, where he struggled to his feet in a confused sort of way, as if dazed, and made no further attempt to ascend the slope.

Krapp muttered a Danish oath.

"The boy has a good eye and steady nerves. Why was he not a Dane? He looks like one, and yet I cannot prove it."

Then the chasseur got up and so did Yusuf ben Saadi, when both became aware of the presence of a strange Arab, who saluted the young chief politely, and said:

"Peace be unto you. You have driven off the Sultan, and you are both men."

"Unto you peace," answered Yusuf. "Whom seekest thou, brother?"

The disguised Dane made a peculiar sign and answered:

"I seek my brethren who live under a dark cloud, that their good may be done in secret."

Yusuf answered the sign eagerly, for he had but lately been admitted a member of this secret order of the Arabs, and was still very enthusiastic on its principles, like most neophytes.

"The Brothers of the Cloud are in all the land," he answered. "Is my brother in any need of help? If so, let him ask."

In the mean time Jean Cannon, recognizing his old friend, spite of his disguise, was quick enough to stand aside, pretending not to know him, but wondering all the while where or how Neil Krapp had learned to talk Arabic when he had never heard a hint of it before.

"I need no help," answered Krapp, "save what will aid me to find a person of whom I have heard much, one Yusuf ben Saadi."

The young Arab looked surprised.

"I am Yusuf ben Saadi. What would you with me, my brother?"

Neil looked at him steadily.

"Will my brother let me look at his right temple?" he asked. "That is all!"

Yusuf readily consented, and the stranger put aside the hem of the other's head kerchief and closely inspected a small blue streak to be

seen there, in the form of a conventional thunderbolt in a picture.

"When was the mark made on my brother's temple?" he asked.

"It was put there by the finger of Allah," was the reverent answer, "at my birth."

The Dane nodded.

"I see. Then you are sacred in your tribe, for God has given you something which they can only compass by the point and the ink."

Yusuf bowed his head reverently.

"It is true, brother. But whence have you come, and by what name may I call you as we sit down to meat together?"

The Dane smiled, well pleased.

"You are worthy to be the son of a nobleman, for you have the courtesy and hospitality of a king on his throne. I call myself El Krappa, the horse-dealer, and I came here with Abd-el-Rachman to see if I can find good bargains in your tribe. I can also shoe horses at a pinch, and doctor them if they be sick."

Yusuf waved his hand toward the palace, and said:

"It must please you to share our hospitality, for we would put force on you rather than suffer you to depart unfasted."

"I will come," answered Neil.

"And who is this Frank?" he continued, with a nod toward Jean Cannon, who stood by in silence, understanding nothing.

"That is one of the French dogs, curses on them. He came here as a spy, and will die as a spy, if he have not the special favor of Allah."

"Indeed!" observed the Dane. "Then that is why he was enticed into fighting the lion, is it?"

Yusuf colored slightly.

"No one enticed him. He wished to do it."

"And he seems to have driven off the beast."

"For the time, yes. But wait till it is dark. Then we shall see."

El Krappa uttered a cry of surprise.

"In the dark! You will not surely go out after the lion in the dark."

"And why not, if the Frank wishes?"

"Because he knows not the danger, and you are bound to warn him."

"Why am I bound to warn him?"

"Because you took him away from the camp at Bou Farik, and swore to be answerable for his life to Allah and the French."

Yusuf looked amazed.

"How know you that?"

"I have just come from the camp, with Abd-el-Rachman. We traded there, and they told us how one of their men had gone on a message to Abd-el-Kader, under the protection of the Emir Yusuf ben Saadi."

"And the Emir Yusuf has not ceased to give him protection," said the young Arab in a sullen tone. "I stay by him in the hour of peril; and if the lion slay him, then my danger is equal to his."

"But why run him into danger at all?" asked Neil Krapp quietly.

The young Arab glanced at Jean Cannon with an expression of bitter hatred.

"Because he has come between me and my sun and moon," he answered. "He ran into danger with his eyes open. Let him take the result of his own folly. Come, my brother, let us go to the palace. We are safe from a visit of the lion, till it be dark. The shot stunned him."

He led the way to the palace, and Neil Krapp followed him, while Jean Cannon, wondering much at the mystery, took his way to his own quarter, after exchanging a meaning look with his disguised comrade.

As for Neil Krapp, he devoted himself with such assiduity to the task of ingratiating himself with the young Arab that he succeeded, long before it was night, in worming out of him all the secret of his jealousy and the plan he had formed for getting rid of the chasseur, without being responsible for his death.

This once accomplished, it was comparatively easy for the keen old Dane, with his crafty and experienced nature, to persuade the artless young chief that it would be a foolish thing for him to expose his own life to the lion to aid in the death of Jean Cannon.

"Let him die alone, as he wishes to go out alone," he said, "and if he wishes to meet this girl, instead of the lion, let him run all the danger with her. The lion will be so angry, he is sure to kill them both to-night. But you do not want to have the girl killed, do you?"

Yusuf hesitated and confessed:

"I do not know. Sometimes I hate her and wish it. At other times I only see her face, and long for her for my wife."

"You shall have her for your wife," said El Krappa, encouragingly; and so great was the influence he had already acquired over the boy, that Yusuf had forgotten that he had never seen El Krappa before that day.

"You shall have her for your wife and the Frank shall be given as meat to the lion. I myself can cast a spell over him if I will."

Yusuf was all attention in a moment.

"A spell. Can you cast spells?"

El Krappa looked mysterious.

"Hush! not so loud. It is true; but as the



art is forbidden, I only practice it for the good of my friends."

Yusuf looked round apprehensively, and then whispered, eagerly:

"Can you cast a love spell, too?"

El Krappa nodded.

Yusuf fidgeted about for some time, and at last burst out:

"If you will cast a spell on both, I will give you my horse Sabok, that is swifter than the wind. Make her mad after me, and let me have the triumph of knowing I am not supplanted by a Frank."

This was what the Dane had been working up through the whole conversation, and he answered, in a confidential way:

"I can do it for you, oh son of Saadi, for I knew and loved your father in old days; but I must do things my own way."

"You shall have free pass everywhere," the young man assented, eagerly. "I will see to it myself. What do you require?"

"I must go alone to the quarters of the Frank that I may cast the spell over him," was the reply; "and all the spies that are round him must be removed while I am with him. If any eye behold my incantation, it will be useless, and this Frank will be given fresh power. Then I must see the girl, too, and to do that I must be left entirely alone for all this night."

"It shall be done," answered Yusuf. "I will see that the guards are kept in the palace all night. But are you not afraid of the Sultan, who is sure to return here in his anger?"

El Krappa smiled.

"Leave the Sultan to me. When the day dawns you will see his body stretched on the grass beside that of the Frank."

As he spoke the Dane rose up and pointed to the western sky, now crimson in the sunset, observing:

"There is no time to lose. Give your orders if you wish to have everything well in the morning. You will hear all sorts of strange sounds round the palace at night. Heed them not, save to keep closer in the house. Any living thing out to-night is food for the evil spirits I shall summon to do my will."

Yusuf, thoroughly awed by superstition, crept out of the room with a humility widely different from his usual haughty bearing, and Neil Krapp indulged in a hearty laugh all to himself over the credulity of the Arab, while he quietly proceeded to the quarters of his comrade, Jean Cannon, whom he found cleaning his musket.

The Dane made a gesture for silence till he had examined the vicinity of the room for spies, and then he came and sat down by Jean, and said:

"Now tell me all that has happened here, and why you are fooling your time around a girl, risking your life, and so on. Who is this girl?"

"My sister. No; that is, I thought she was, but she isn't," replied Jean Cannon, simply. "Don't you remember the girl on the stage at Toulon, on whose account I suffered so much? She is here."

"I thought as much; and who is she?"

"She is the daughter of my foster-parents, and until lately I believed her my sister."

"But she is not?"

"No; so she was told by her mother on her death-bed. I am a foundling, Krapp."

The Dane looked at him attentively.

"So you told me once before; but you would never tell me anything more of your life. Will you tell me now?"

Jean hesitated and looked gloomy.

"It is a sad record. Why should I go into it? I only know that I am alone in the world. I shall never be certain whether or not I am a base-born waif, abandoned to hide my mother's shame. Let it go."

"But it may be, my comrade, that I can throw some light on the past if I knew all the circumstances. Do you not know where you were found and by whom?"

"I was found by the highway at Bologna in Italy in a ruined hovel in 1809: that is all that is certain, Krapp."

The Dane nodded and muttered:

"The very year. Now if all the rest be the same, I may yet find out what I hope for."

"What is that you say?" asked Jean.

"Nothing, my comrade. But tell me, were there no marks on your clothing?"

"Only two letters, J. L."

"Good. We are getting on. But is there no mark on your body, no birth-mark?"

Jean was about to answer when they heard outside the palace the dull thunder of the lion's roar, and the chasseur started:

"He is coming again. I must go after him. I promised that Arab that I would go and he must not come to the place of meeting and find me absent."

He snatched up his weapons and was going to the door when Krapp observed:

"The Arab will not be there; I have seen to that. We shall have all the garden to ourselves and the lion—be it understood the lion will be there all the time."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that if we are quick and resolute,

we may be half-way to Bou Farik before morning and no one the wiser. Where is your horse, comrade?"

"In the palace stables, but the door is locked."

"Ay, to keep out the lion: but the key hangs above it. We can let all the horses out if we please, comrade."

"But the Arabs will hear us."

"I have provided against that too. They think I am a great magician and that all the powers of the air are out to-night. We can keep them quiet till the morning, but, after that, when they find they have been deceived we shall have to ride for our lives."

As Krapp spoke the lion roared a second time, and the Dane rose to his feet.

"Come, it is time we were outside, if we hope to do anything. Where is your girl?"

"She will wait for me at the little door in the harem wall above the Lion's Rock."

"Let us go there then so as to be on time before the lion comes to the top of the hill. He will be hungry to-night and dangerous. We must feed him well, or he will give trouble."

Jean struck his forehead angrily.

"And I let loose the goat that was tied there for him. It is too bad. I was thinking only of getting him near enough to shoot."

"You'll get him near enough, Jean. The trouble will be he will be too near. But I have been after lions before. Come."

They left the palace and found the night very dark for the moon had not risen and there was a mist on the mountain side.

Krapp led the way to the stables and unlocked the door with the clumsy wooden key of Arab manufacture that hung above the lock in guileless Moslem fashion.

The neighing of horses sounded their welcome but it was almost immediately silenced as the lion roared for the third time, and was close by them in the garden.

"We have no time to lose," whispered Krapp.

"Lead out the first horse as quick as you can."

The chasseur hastily led out one of the animals and almost at the same instant the lion roared a fourth time.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE FLIGHT.

THE horse that Jean Cannon was leading stopped at the sound of that roar, and trembled violently, cowering down as if about to sink to the earth and refusing to proceed, till the terrible sounds ceased.

Then Krapp looked round and clutched his comrade's arm.

"There he comes," he whispered. "Let the horse alone. The lion will keep him there."

Jean instinctively brought his musket forward, as he saw the glowing eyes of the lion, a little way off, close to the ground.

"Don't think of shooting," whispered Krapp, "his head is hard and you'll only anger him. Come away slowly, facing him all the time."

They slowly retired, step by step, and as they retreated the green eyes slowly glided on, without an audible sound.

All this while the poor horse stood trembling, seemingly unable to move.

At last when they were about fifty feet from the animal, the lion laid his head to the earth again and began the succession of sighs and moans which preceded his grand roar or series of roars.

Firm as were the nerves of the Dane and his comrade, neither could refrain from shuddering as they listened to these awful sounds.

The roar of a lion in a cage by daylight is one thing, but at night, when the beast is loose and not a hundred feet away, it is a very different matter to listen to.

In the midst of their tremors, however, they could not help watching the strange conduct of the lion and the horse.

While the beast was roaring the horse stood trembling; but as soon as the sound ceased, the charger slowly advanced on the lion, a step at a time, as if fascinated by the glowing green eyes.

Krapp laid his hand on the chasseur's arm.

"He will lead him to his den," he whispered. "I have seen him do it before."

Too much amazed to stir, Jean Cannon stood and watched the strange drama.

The horse kept on advancing toward the lion and the king of the desert stood still making a low purring noise as if pleased till the charger was close to him.

Then the lion turned and swept slowly off, and the horse followed submissively.

They watched till both had disappeared in the darkness and then Krapp observed:

"We are safe now. We can go to the stable and saddle the best horses that are left. In the morning we shall be among the rocks and it will be our own fault if we fail."

They went into the stable and the Dane struck a match to inspect the horses.

"Which of these belongs to the Emir Yusuf?" he asked. "He told me it was the best in the tribe and we may as well take it."

Jean Cannon pointed to an empty stall.

"He stood there. It is the one that followed the lion so quietly."

Krapp laughed.

"So much the better. He will not be at the head of the pursuit. Take the best and let us lead off a few for remounts."

They saddled six horses; then mounted and rode softly out past the harem wall.

All was silent in the garden.

"The lion has gone," whispered Jean.

As if to give the lie to the assertion the voice of the king of beasts rose again in the darkness on the side of the hill, but some distance below, followed by the shriek of a frightened horse.

Then came a scramble and the sound of a heavy blow, after which the low rattling growl of the lion proclaimed that he had seized his victim.

Krapp turned to his comrade.

"Keep still now," he whispered. "It is the moment when he is most dangerous, till he has drank the blood. He would think we wanted to rob him of his prey."

They remained where they were, the horses trembling violently as if they recognized the danger in which they were.

The moments seemed like hours, till at last they heard the lion rise and go down the hill dragging the horse after him.

"Now we can move," said Krapp. "Only tell me where you are to meet this girl about whom you are so anxious?"

"At the top of the bank," answered Jean.

"We must tie up the horses first."

Krapp nodded and they dismounted and tied the horses to some of the trees in the garden, then stole around to the low door in the harem wall, where Jean Cannon knocked softly.

"Who is there?" asked a low voice on the other side of the wall.

"It is I, Jean, thy brother, Fifine. If thou hast courage, we can escape to-night."

"Who is with thee?" asked Fifine, suspiciously.

"I heard a voice that I know not."

"It is one of my comrades, Neil Krapp, who has risked his life for us. We have horses, and before morning we shall be out of danger. Only come, Fifine."

The door opened and the girl crept out. He could only make out the dim outline of her form in the dark; but he knew her voice as she said:

"What have you done with the lion? I heard him pass into the garden, yet I left a goat tied in his way."

"I loosed the goat, and the lion has the best horse in Abd-el-Kader's stable instead. Come, let us mount and flee, before any one comes out by chance."

"Where is Yusuf ben Saadi?" asked Fifine, stopping with unexpected obstinacy. "He said he would come out with you to meet the lion. Have you killed him?"

"Yusuf is in the palace, asleep. We have not killed him. We have only deceived him."

Here Neil Krapp interrupted them with gruff abruptness saying:

"If this lady is a Christian and wishes to go to her own people, we have no time to lose, for I have yet to find my comrade, Hans Hansen. This is no place or time to talk, comrade. If the girl wants to stay with the Arabs, let her stay, and we will depart."

"She does not want to stay, she cannot," cried Jean impulsively. "Oh, Fifine, say that you were not in earnest when you spoke of wedding the Arab. Think of home and friends and that I am ready to take you there."

"I have no home or friends," answered she in a dreary tone. "Why should I go from here where I have my only friends? What have you, a poor soldier, to offer me in comparison with what I give up when I flee from here? Go, Jean. You can be happy in France. As for me, my lot is cast here."

Neil Krapp growled out an impatient oath.

"If we had known that we need not have taken so much trouble," he said angrily. "Come, my comrade, it is time we were away, unless indeed this girl wishes to rouse the Arabs and have us slaughtered."

Jean Cannon, who could not help hoping against hope, that Fifine still loved him, redoubled his entreaties to her, but she was firm and insisted on saying:

"No. I have given my word to Yusuf and I must stay. But you need not lose this good opportunity to escape. Go, Jean, and Heaven protect you. I shall always think of you as my good, dear brother."

"Very well," he returned sullenly; "then I will stay and be killed. I came here for you and I will not go without you. In the morning I shall confess all, draw my sword and die fighting the Arabs. I will not leave here without you."

The menace had its effect; for she saw that he was in earnest, and at last she said:

"Well, I will go with you; but only on one condition, my brother."

"And what is that?"

"That I leave behind me a letter to Yusuf telling him where I have gone, and asking him to follow me if he loves me."

Jean shuddered with angry jealousy.

"As you please. Then I am to understand that in any event you love this man and do not love me. Is that it?"

"Yes, I love this man," she said quietly.



"And I love you too, Jean; but it is only as a brother."

"Very well," he said sullenly. "I consent. But I warn you, he will never be your husband unless he turns Christian, which is not likely. If I am to be your brother, I claim a brother's right to withhold my consent."

Fifine made no answer save to draw from her bosom a letter which she gave him.

"Leave that at his door, and I will go with you," was all she said.

Then Krapp with a grunt of relief at the end of what he thought a foolish piece of sentimentality put her on her horse, and they rode quietly away through the garden past the palace.

In the shadow of a tower a man was in waiting, to whom Krapp said:

"Is it thou, Hans Hansen?"

"Yes," answered the voice of the pipe-seller. "I thought you were never coming. Are you sure they suspect nothing in the palace?"

"As sure as a man can be that knows them of old as children to our wits," retorted Krapp.

"Here, take this letter and nail it up to the door of the Emir Yusuf. He will come after us in the morning, and there will be good fun when he and my comrade meet."

The two were conversing in Danish, which neither of the others understood, and Hansen asked his comrade:

"Why will there be fun?"

"Have you ever seen two stags fight about a doe?" retorted Krapp. "My comrade is in love with this girl, who says she loves the Arab, and, my faith, I hardly think she knows her own mind. But the end of it will be there will be a fight between the two white heads, and I will bet on mine all the time."

"And which is yours?" said Hansen.

"My master's son, of course. It is all true. I have seen the mark, and it must be he. As for the other poor little creature, it must be dead long ago."

Hansen went to the door of the Emir Yusuf's apartments and nailed up the letter, after which he rode round to them and said:

"Come along. We have had riding to do before the morning, when we shall have passed the Kabyles and be in sight of Bou Farik."

He led them off, by a number of by-ways into the mountains, avoiding the huge rock which dominated the Valley of Sweet Waters, and keeping up a rapid pace by the aid of frequent changes of horses during the night.

They met not a soul all the time, and Jean Cannon found Fifine so silent and sullen in her demeanor that he abandoned all attempt at speaking to her after awhile.

When the morning dawned they found themselves in the upper passes of the Atlas mountains, with the snow line just above them, and, looking back could see the towers of Abd-el-Kader's fortress like the turrets of a doll's house far below them, while the camps of the desert were like black dots on the yellow sand.

Then for the first time Jean Cannon saw the face of Fifine clearly and found that it wore an expression of great sorrow and anxiety. She did not look like a captive escaping to liberty, but rather like a slave being carried to the market against her will.

Old Krapp and his fellow Dane had the watchful, selfish look of men intent only on personal safety and did not notice the girl, but the chasseur did and observed in a low tone as they halted to breathe their horses, a little apart from the rest:

"One would think you were sorry to go back among Christians again, Fifine. This Arab, with his fine clothes has bewitched you."

She looked at him coldly.

"He is a prince among his people and would have raised me from a slave to a princess."

"Yet you have left him behind."

"I have. I was a fool to do it perhaps."

"It is not too late to turn back," he suggested bitterly. "We will not stop you."

She made no answer but gazed down at the distant fortress with such intentness, that he inquired at last:

"Well, what are you looking for?"

As he spoke a tiny white puff of smoke was seen to issue from the doll's house below, and the girl pointed to it triumphantly.

"I was looking for that," she answered. "If you listen you will hear the reply to my letter to Yusuf ben Saadi."

They listened and at last came the low faint boom of a gun.

"That is my answer," observed Fifine to Jean with a smile of strange import.

"Your answer to what?" he repeated amazed.

"The answer to my letter. I told him that I had fled to my own people, but that I loved him better than any man on earth."

Jean Cannon turned as white as a sheet, and his eyes blazed as he growled:

"You told him that? You, Fifine Cannon, that I have hunted for all these years, tell an infidel Arab that you love him better than any one!"

"And why not, monsieur?"

"True, why not? Very good, mademoiselle; but if that letter brings this man to harm, it will be your own fault."

"To harm!" she echoed. "What harm can it bring him? I have a right to marry whom I please, for my father and mother are dead, and I am alone in the world."

Jean ground his teeth to smother a curse.

"And I, then, I suppose I am nothing."

"That depends. If you are my brother to help me, you are much. If you are anything else, good-by, monsieur."

He controlled himself with an effort.

"You spoke of an answer to your letter. What answer did it require?"

"Simply this: I told him if he made up his mind to follow me and reclaim me at any hazard, to fire a gun as soon as he had read my letter, and that if he had courage to come alone I would go back with him if he succeeded in reaching us and still loved me."

Jean stared as if he could hardly believe his ears.

"You told him that?"

"Yes, monsieur. Why not? He will not come with enough men to put you to any peril, for they could not find the horses swift enough to catch us. He will come, if at all, alone, and you will meet him in the plain of Bou Farik. Do you understand yet?"

He shook his head.

"I confess I do not understand what is your object in all this, Fifine."

Her manner changed from its air of defiant mockery to one of deep seriousness as she said to him:

"Jean, my brother, I am not so heartless as you think. In fact, I have too much heart. That is my trouble. I love you as a brother, and I love Yusuf too. I came away with you because I knew that if I did not you would throw away your life, and I owed that to France. I have sent for Yusuf because I love him, and I want to see if he really loves me. If he do, he will be ready to do anything for my sake, even to turning a Christian, if he sees that I will not go back to Islam. If he do turn to our faith, what shall I not deserve?"

"But if he do not," asked Jean, slowly, "will you turn to his once more?"

"Never," she said, firmly. "I pretended to do it to save myself from a life of shame, but that is all past and gone. Henceforth I am a free Christian."

Here old Krapp called out:

"Time to ride on. The horses are breathed, and the way is long. Besides, they are signaling after us, and that means trouble."

"Signaling! Where?"

The Dane pointed to several columns of smoke at different points on the mountains.

Every now and then these columns seemed to separate themselves with a series of rounded puffs of smoke, like clouds, as if some one were interrupting them from below.

"That means that the Arabs are talking to each other and scouring the country to find which way we have gone," said Hansen, the pipe-seller. "When they find the track, you will see every fire give four puffs and then go out."

"They'll find the track soon enough," growled his fellow Dane. "No use to watch for the four puffs. Best get on at once."

They rode on through the pass, and as they reached the summit, looked back. Every fire had gone out.

"They have found the track," said the pipe-seller, in a grave tone, "and that is not the worst of it, either."

"Well, what is the worst of it?" asked Jean.

"The worst of it is that we had to take a long circuit to escape running on the Kabyles, while they will cut off more than half by coming straight up the mountain. We must ride fast if we expect to reach the French camp without a fight with their best horsemen."

"Gallop on then," cried the chasseur, and away they went at a rattling pace down the slope of the mountains toward the yellow plain of Bou Farik.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE LAST DUEL.

THE fugitives had in their favor the fact that they had each a horse to change: but they had against them the disadvantage that they had already traveled nearly fifty miles of mountain roads during the night, and even the much enduring barb is subject to more or less fatigue after a long journey over rocks.

They galloped rapidly on down the mountains, the sun rising higher and growing hotter as they advanced; but it was near noon before they at last reached the plain of Bou Farik, and Krapp observed:

"Only fifteen leagues more; but I wish it was nearer five, for my part."

They halted by a little stream that issued from the mountain, and there watered their horses, while Krapp suggested that, as they had brought no corn with them, it would be well to let the animals graze a little.

They took off the bridles, and the hardy little steeds cropped eagerly at the remains of the barley harvest that had been left by the French in their arduous reaping, a few weeks before that day.

And all this time they saw no signs of any pursuit.

At last, when they had rested for about half an hour, Fifine Cannon, who had been sitting apart from the rest, as if conscious of her peculiar position, alone among so many men, cried out:

"Look! look! they are coming round the shoulder of the hills."

They all jumped to their feet and looked in the direction indicated.

A party of horsemen, in a cloud of dust, was coming along, skirting the foot of the mountain, and threatening to cut them off from the French camp at Bou Farik.

In a great hurry they bridled up and rode out into the plain at a sharp pace, the cloud of dust approaching so rapidly that they felt sure it must be pursuers.

So, for several minutes, they raced on, till it became evident that they had the heels of the Arabs and would get past out of gunshot.

As soon as this became plain, they saw the cloud of dust come to a slower pace, while a single horseman darted on faster than ever, and came racing toward them.

"That fellow must ride a wonder," said Krapp, the Dane. "He leaves the other horses as if they were standing still."

"It is Yusuf," observed Fifine, smiling with a strange look of pride. "He said he would come, and he has come. See: the others are turning back."

And to the amazement of the whole party, they saw the other Arabs turn round and ride back toward the mountains, while Yusuf ben Saadi came on, all alone.

When this became evident, Krapp pulled up to a journey amble and said:

"What is the use of killing the horses? It is three against one in our favor. Let this young man come on. I told you we should have fun, Hans Hansen."

They ambled on at the usual easy pace of the barb on a journey, while their pursuer came on at the former swift gallop, and finally came near enough to shout:

"Stop, villains and violators of hospitality! Turn, for the avenger of Allah is at hand! Give up the woman you have stolen."

"What does he say?" asked Jean Cannon, in an angry tone; and when Krapp had told him, he said in a manner of concentrated ferocity:

"Then, *parbleu*, he seeks his death and he shall have it."

He wheeled his horse, and drew his long saber; then rode to meet Yusuf ben Saadi.

"I told you we should have fun" said old Krapp, gleefully. "Now you will see the two white-heads fight, and we shall see who gets the best of it."

But Fifine Cannon, to the surprise of the whole party, wheeled her horse also, and rode faster than the chasseur, whom she passed, calling out:

"No, no, Jean, it must not be. You do not know. You must not fight him."

The two Danes turned their horses also, and the whole party came together in a confused bunch, Fifine in the midst, between the two angry young men, entreating first one then the other, each in his own tongue, to refrain from bloodshed, while Krapp and Hansen looked on, puzzled what to do.

At last Jean Cannon, furious at the behavior of the girl, shouted out:

"Away if you do not wish me to think you have dishonored our mother's name. I tell you I must fight this man. One of us never goes home alive."

He would not listen to her as she tried to say something he did not understand, but beckoned to Yusuf:

"You talk no French," he shouted: "but you can understand what *this* means."

As he spoke, he leaped off his horse, threw down his musket and pistol, tore off his jacket, drew his sword, and threw away the scabbard on the grass.

Yusuf understood the gestures if not the words, for he followed the example by jumping off his horse, throwing aside his superfluous garments, and running to meet the chasseur on foot.

Fifine actually urged her horse in between them to stop the battle, when old Krapp, with a grim chuckle, caught her charger by the bridle and forced it away.

"You should have thought of all that before you set them fighting," he said gruffly. "It's no use crying now. These white-heads are good stuff and they will fight every time."

Then Jean Cannon and Yusuf ben Saadi closed together for Jean Cannon's fortieth and last duel.

They were evenly matched in height and size, while their faces were the very counterparts of each other, and the blue eyes glared at each other with equal fury.

They advanced slowly and cautiously. The chasseur had not forgotten the lesson he had once received on horseback, and did not err this time through over confidence. Yusuf ben Saadi on his part knew his man, whom he had seen overcome the executioner with so much



ease, and he did not mean to give away a chance.

They moved slowly toward each other, not crossing swords, for Jean Cannon knew it was useless to try and reach Yusuf's sword, and the Arab had his own style of fighting.

Presently the Frenchman made a vicious cut at the Arab, which Yusuf only escaped by a supple movement of the body and retaliated by the same light slash at the face with which he had once before drawn blood from Jean Cannon.

The chasseur on foot and opposite to a duelist was, however, too wary to be taken napping, and he parried the slash with force, making a nick in the keen blade of the Arab, while he cut back again and found himself closed in with the other at last.

But before a dozen blows and parries had been exchanged, Yusuf broke away, for he found that the Frenchman's style was too much for him.

With a bound he leaped back and then came on, leaping from side to side, and first fainting in one place then another, careless of receiving a blow so that he got an opportunity for a slash.

The chasseur laughed at him.

"I have you now, my chicken," he cried. "I know your points and they are no good. See, here is a true cut."

The Arab was making a wide feint and as he came down with a cut at Jean Cannon's leg the chasseur cut right down at his arm and laid it open from wrist to elbow.

"Aha!" he cried savagely. "I have seen your blood at last, accursed Pagan! Now take care of yourself, for this duel is to the death."

He was rushing forward to repeat the blow when, with a loud scream, Fifi Cannon came running between them and threw herself on Yusuf's breast, shielding him and crying:

"Hold, Jean, Yusuf, you are brothers! Do you not see it? Are you blind?"

The chasseur fell back a step and glared at the pair in amazement, while Fifi hastily tore up her veil to bind the arm of the wounded Arab, speaking to him in his own tongue, and saying:

"Are you blind? Can you not see that this is your brother?"

Yusuf ben Saadi looked calmly at his wounded arm, but answered:

"Why do you speak these lies? All the tribe knows I am the son of Saadi, who died in battle with the Christians. Let this man finish his work since Allah has given me into his hand."

"Is there a man of the tribe that has blue eyes and yellow hair?" she asked. "Look at this Frank, and look in the mirror, and you will see that you are brothers."

"Not so," answered Yusuf, still more proudly. "I have no brother. I am marked by the hand of Allah as one alone—the sacred one of the tribe of Bou Farik."

Here Jean Cannon, who had been at first all in a daze of stupefaction at Fifi's words, asked earnestly:

"What is it you say? What is it you mean? What do you know, that you say we are brothers?"

Unlike the Arab, with his strong religious prejudices, Jean was open to conviction, and the words "you are brothers" set him to seeing all the strange resemblances in the figure and face of the other.

"I say that you are brothers, stamped by the hand of God himself," responded the girl earnestly. "Do you know, Jean, that this man has on his temple the same mark which was found on you when your father brought you to my mother at Bologna?"

The chasseur started, and threw down his sword with a cry of horror.

"It is true!" he ejaculated. "Abou Goum told me so, and I did not believe it. Ask him if I may see it."

Fifi turned to Yusuf.

"Will you believe you are his brother if you see on his temple the same mark which the hand of Allah placed on yours?" she asked him.

Yusuf ben Saadi began to tremble.

"It is impossible," he said. "What have I done that Allah should make me raise my hand to slay my brother? It cannot be."

"Will you look at his temple and let him look at yours?" she asked, quietly.

Yusuf heaved a deep breath.

"I will," was all he said.

Then the two men lately cutting at each other's life came slowly toward each other, as if afraid to touch, and the Arab looked at the chasseur's right temple. There, in the unmistakable blue of the birthmark, was the indelible zig-zag streak of the thunderbolt.

Yusuf threw aside the folds of his own head-gear and presented his temple to the chasseur, who uttered a low cry of amazed horror.

"It is true! I had nearly killed my brother!"

Then the two brothers, separated from infancy and now so strangely met at the point of the sword, stood looking at each other, and Fifi stood with an arm around each, talking alternately in French and Arabic.

"I have known it ever since my mother died, Jean, or at least have suspected it, since it

seemed impossible any but twin brothers should have such a singular mark exactly alike in each."

Then to her Arab lover:

"You see that I told no falsehood, but that he is your brother. It is well known in that harem that you were not the son of Abd-el-Kader, who adopted you as a baby, but none knew who were your parents until I came here to-day and met this grim old Dane they call Neil Krapp."

"And what knows he?" asked Yusuf, with a glance of wonder at the two Danes, who were sitting on their horses a little way off, smoking their pipes with a philosophy, that all the fighting failed to disturb.

"Why, it is El Krappa, the wizard," he went on, in a low tone, "and Ab-del-Rachman, the pipe-seller. What can they know about me or my people?"

"It was El Krappa, as you call him, that just now gave me the clue which has eluded me for years," answered Fifi. "Let us come and see him and find out if he really knows who you are."

Yusuf ben Saadi, as we must still call him for awhile, bowed his head gravely and took Jean Cannon by the arm while they went forward.

It was singular to see the way in which the two brothers—if brothers they were—looked at each other from time to time with side glances, as if ashamed to be caught looking, yet rather proud of each other, though unable to speak a common language.

It was old Krapp that set them at ease when they came up by talking alternately in French and Arabic and explaining everything.

"Yes," he said. "I see now what a stupid old fool I've been all this time, blind as a bat, not to see what was straight before my nose."

He began to examine them closely.

"Yes, there is the regular Lindholm nose, and the thin lip that shows what a devil of a temper the counts always had. There is the figure of both just like old Count Mathias, and above all the two marks exactly alike on the temple. Jean, you are not a Frenchman. I always told you you were not. You have the true fighting cut of the Norseman. And as for this boy here, he is your brother as sure as one pea is like another. And you are no base-borns either, as we will prove when we get home, but the lawful twin boys of Count Ernest Lindholm, who was killed at Naples in the year 1809 by the bandits, Cartouche and Cornaro, when you children were carried off for ransom."

"But how comes it," asked Yusuf in Arabic when he had heard this story, "that one brother was taken South and the other to the North?"

"Simple enough."

"How simple enough?"

"The soldiers broke up their band into two parts after they had killed my master, and while Cornaro went to sea from the bay of Naples, Cartouche fled to the north and abandoned one of the children at Bologna, when he saw that there was no more chance of getting any ransom for them."

Here Jean Cannon, who had been unusually thoughtful while the story was going on, broke in with the remark:

"He must have been sorry and wished to save my life or he would not have placed me where my cries were certain to be heard. God bless Father Cannon and my mother. I shall never forget that I am French by adoption if not by birth."

Then he turned to Yusuf and held out his hand to him with a smile.

"Mon frere," was all he said.

And Yusuf only replied:

"Akhwan."

Yet each knew the other had said:

"My brother."

As they all got to horse and rode on to the French camp at Bou Farik, the Corporal of Chasseurs said to Krapp:

"My friend, I shall never fight another duel, no matter what the provocation."

Krapp shrugged his shoulders.

"You have made that vow before."

"You mistake. I said before I would never fight another duel save for a blow, but now I have done with it forever."

"And why?"

"Because I dare not run again the risk of killing or being killed by, my own brother. I have fought my last duel."

Many years have passed away since the beleaguered camp of Bou Farik saw the bloody harvest reaped and great changes have come over the face of the French province of Algeria.

Abd-el-Kader after a long and gallant fight against the forces of European civilization has yielded at last, made his peace and retired to Damascus to pass away the rest of his existence a pensionary of France.

The First Chasseurs of Africa have made themselves a grand name and four other regiments of the same magnificent cavalry have been organized at different times. The Zouaves have flashed into life, with their brilliant uniform and dashing deeds.

Father Bugeaud the colonel has in course of

time become Marshal Bugeaud, Duke of Isly, with a title derived from a famous battle wherein he finally broke the Arab power. And the Arabs, too, they are changed for the better as the French think but very much for the worse as the old Mollaks insist, for many of them have taken service with the Infidels.

Especially has one, a chief, who has risen to distinction in the French service and now bears the rank of general.

"General Yusuf's compliments and these of Madame to Colonel Cannon, and hopes the colonel will honor his tent with a visit," says a white headed old soldier who seems to be a sort of orderly invalid as he salutes the colonel of the First Chasseurs in the year 1863 in the plain of Bou Farik.

The colonel looks up from writing a report and nods familiarly:

"Tell the general I'm busy at my quarterly report, Krapp," he says, "but I will be with him and madame in half an hour."

One may see that the old invalid has on his sleeve nearly a dozen stripes, indicating long service in the army, and he has a way of saluting which is old-fashioned and formal.

As he comes out of the tent he looks out over the plain of Bou Farik, and mutters to himself:

"It is changed since we saw it first."

Indeed it is, for not a wild Arab has been seen in Bou Farik for many a year. The harvests are there and the date-palms, but so are the white walls of villas, and there is not only a mosque, but the spire of a Christian church in sight from the door of the tent.

And as far as necessity goes there might as well be no tents there save that they are cooler than houses.

The First Chasseurs are cantoned in big airy barracks but the colonel and the staff of the department jaural have had tents set out for the summer, principally that the ladies and children may enjoy themselves.

The ladies and children? Yes, there are at least a dozen little white-heads and dark-heads playing round yonder huge marquee with the tricolor in front and a spahi standing guard.

That is the tent of General Yusuf, the only Arab general in the French service, and department commander at Bou Farik.

You can see him sitting on a carpet in the tent, for he has not got over his old Arab habits yet, though he has married a French wife and goes to the mass regularly.

His face is tanned with the sun to the color of saddle leather, but there is that in his complexion and blue eyes that shows he was originally a fair man, and all his children are white-heads.

A pretty matronly lady comes to him as he smokes his chibouque, and says:

"What is the matter with Jean that he does not come, Yusuf?"

He sends word that he is busy with his quarterly reports, and will be here in an hour, *ma chérie*, he replies, with a smile. "Why are you so anxious to have him come?"

"Is it possible you have forgotten the day?" she asks, with another smile. "It is as much to you as to him."

General Yusuf looks puzzled, thinks, and finally bursts out laughing:

"Why, it is our birthday, Fifi, and I have forgotten all about it. But you never forget anything."

"I never forget to love you and Jean," she replies fondly. "Do you remember, Yusuf, how jealous you were of each other and all about poor me?"

"I do," he says soberly. "It was the turning-point of our lives. Had I not loved you I should never have followed you. Had he not loved you too, we might never have met. It was fate that we should meet just as we did and find that we were brothers of an honorable house."

"Which never did you any good."

"Say not so. It is true that all the property of our father had gone to distant relatives, but he had left us one thing worth all the rest."

"And what was that?"

"Our Danish fighting blood which has made me a general and Jean the colonel of that famous regiment in which he earned his title of

#### THE MAN OF FORTY DUELS!

THE END.

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